DEVOUT EXERCISES

OF THE

HEART,

IN

MEDITATION and SOLILOQUY, PRAYER and PRAISE.

BY THE LATE PIOUS AND INGENIOUS
Mrs ROWE.

REVISED AND PUBLISHED, AT HER REQUEST, BY
I. WATTS, *D. D.*

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TO

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An intimate FRIEND *of Mrs* ROWE.

MADAM,

IF these pious MEDITATIONS of so sublime a genius should be inscrib'd to any name, there is none but your's must have stood in the front of them. That long and constant intimacy of friendship with which you delighted to honour her, that high esteem and veneration you are pleased to pay her memory, and the sacred likeness and sympathy between two kindred souls, absolutely determine where this respect should be paid.

Beſides, MADAM, you well know, that ſome copies out of theſe papers have been your own ſeveral years, by the gift of the deceaſed; and the favour you have done me lately, by your permiſſion to peruſe them, has aſſiſted the correction of theſe MANUSCRIPTS, and would add another reaſon to ſupport this inſcription of them, if your fear of aſſuming too much honour could but have admitted this piece of juſtice.

I know, MADAM, your tenderneſs and indulgence to every thing Mrs ROWE has written, cannot with-hold your judgment from ſuſpecting ſome of her expreſſions to be a little too rapturous, and too near a-kin to the language of the myſtical writers; yet your piety and candour will take no ſuch offence as to prevent your beſt improvement by them

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in all that is divine and holy; and may your retired hours find ſuch happy aſſiſtances and elevations hereby, that you may commence the joys of angels and of bleſſed ſpirits before-hand.

And when your valuable life has been long extended amidſt all the temporal bleſſings you enjoy, and the Chriſtian virtues you practiſe, may you, at the call of God, find a gentle diſmiſſion from mortality, and aſcend on high to meet your deceaſed friend in paradiſe. Nor can I ſuppoſe that any of the inhabitants of that bliſsful region will ſooner recognize your glorified ſpirit, or will ſalute your firſt appearance there with a more tender ſenſe of mutual ſatisfaction. There may you join with your beloved *Philomela*, in paying celeſtial worſhip in exalted and unknown forms, to her God, and your God; and

may the harmony of the place be assisted by your united songs to *Jesus*, your common Saviour!

I am, MADAM, with great sincerity and esteem,

Your most faithful

and obedient servant,

Newington, Sept. 29.
1737.

I. WATTS.

THE

PREFACE.

THE admirable author of these devotional papers has been in high esteem among the ingenious and the polite, since so many excellent fruits of her pen, both in verse and prose, have appeared in public. She was early honoured under the feign'd name of Philomela, *before the world was allowed to know Mrs* Elisabeth Singer, *by the name drawn from her family, or that of Mrs* Rowe, *which she acquired by marriage.*

Though many of her writings that were published in her lifetime discover a pious and heavenly temper, and a warm zeal for religion and virtue; yet she chose to conceal the devotions of her heart *till she was got beyond the censure and applause of mortals. 'Twas enough that God, whom she loved with ardent and supreme affection, was witness to all her secret and intense breathings after him.*

In

In February *laſt, he was pleaſed to call her out of our world, and take her to himſelf. Some time after her deceaſe theſe manuſcripts were tranſmitted to me, all incloſed in one ſheet of paper, and directed to me at* Newington *by her own hand. In the midſt of them I found her letter, which intreated me to review them, and commit them to the preſs. This letter I have thought neceſſary to ſhew the world, not ſo much to diſcover my right to publiſh theſe papers, as to let the reader ſee ſomething more of that holy and heavenly character which ſhe maintained, in an uniform manner, both in life and death.*

'Tis now almoſt thirty years years ago ſince I was honoured with her acquaintance, nor could her great modeſty conceal her ſhining graces and accompliſhments; but it is not my province to give a particular account of this excellent woman who has bleſs'd and adorn'd our nation and our age. I expect her temper, her conduct, and her virtues will be ſet in a juſt and pleaſing light among the memoirs of her life, by ſome near relations, to whom the care of her poetical pieces, and her familiar letters is committed.

Theſe Devout Exerciſes *are animated with ſuch fire, as ſeems to ſpeak the lan-*

guage

guage of holy paſſion, and diſcovers them to be the dictates of her heart; and thoſe who were favoured with her chief intimacy will moſt readily believe it. The ſtyle, I confeſs, is raiſed above that of common meditation or ſoliloquy; but let it be remembered ſhe was no common Chriſtian. As her virtues were ſublime, ſo her genius was bright and ſparkling, and the vivacity of her imagination had a tincture of the muſe almoſt from her childhood. This made it natural to her to expreſs the inward ſentiments of her ſoul in more exalted language, and to paint her own ideas in metaphor and rapture, near a-kin to the diction of poeſy.

The reader will here find a ſpirit dwelling in fleſh, elevated into divine tranſports, congenial to thoſe of angels and unbodied minds. Her intenſe love to her God kindles at every hint, and tranſcends the limits of mortality. I ſcarce ever met with any devotional writings which give us an example of a ſoul, at ſpecial ſeaſons, ſo far raiſed above every thing that is not immortal and divine.

Yet ſhe is conſcious of her frailties too: ſhe ſometimes confeſſes her folly and her guilt in the ſight of God, in the moſt affecting language of a deep humiliation. 'Tis with

a pathetic ſenſibility of her weakneſs, and in the ſtrongeſt language of ſelf-diſplicency, ſhe bewails her offences againſt her Creator and Redeemer; and in her intervals of darkneſs ſhe vents her painful complaints and mournings for the abſence of her higheſt and beſt beloved.

Let it be obſerved, that it was much the faſhion, even among ſome divines of eminence in former years, to expreſs the favours of devout love to our Saviour in the ſtyle of the Song of Solomon: *and I muſt confeſs that ſeveral of my compoſures in verſe, written in younger life, were led by thoſe examples unwarily into this track. But if I may be permitted to ſpeak the ſenſe of maturer age, I can hardly think this the happieſt language in which Chriſtians ſhould generally diſcover their warm ſentiments of religion, ſince the clearer and more ſpiritual revelations of the New Teſtament. Yet ſtill it muſt be own'd, there are ſome ſouls favour'd with ſuch beatifying viſits from heaven, and raptur'd with ſuch a flame of divine affection, as more powerfully engages all animal nature in their devotions, and conſtrains them to ſpeak their pureſt and moſt ſpiritual exerciſes in ſuch pathetic and tender expreſſions as may be perverſely*

perverſely profaned by an unholy conſtruction. And the byaſs and propenſity towards this ſtyle is yet ſtronger, where early impreſſions of piety have been made on the heart by devout writings of this kind.

It ſhould be remember'd alſo, there is nothing to be found here which riſes above our ideas; here are none of thoſe abſurd and incomprehenſible phraſes which amuſe the ear with ſounding vanity, and hold reaſon in ſovereign contempt: here are no viſionary ſcenes of wild extravagance, no affectations of the tumid and unmeaning ſtyle, which ſpreads a glaring confuſion over the underſtanding; nothing that leads the reader into the region of thoſe myſtical ſhadows and darkneſs which abound in the Romiſh *writers, under the pretence of refined light and ſublime ecſtacy. Nor is the character of this ingenious author to be blemiſhed with any other reproaches which have been ſometimes caſt on ſuch ſort of meditations.*

I know it hath been ſaid, That this language of rapture addreſs'd to the Deity, is but a new track given to the flow of the ſofter powers, after the diſappointment of ſome meaner love; or, at leaſt, 'tis owing to the want of a proper object and opportunity to fix theſe tender paſſions but this

cannot

cannot be allowed to be the caſe here; for as Mrs Rowe *had been ſought early by ſeveral lovers, ſo ſhe ſpent ſeveral years of younger life in the connubial ſtate, with a gentleman of ſuch accompliſhments and ſuch circumſtances, that he was well fitted to be a partner of her joys and cares.*

I know alſo that this ſoft and paſſionate turn of religious meditation has ſometimes been imputed to injuries and ill-treatment in the marriage-ſtate, whereby the ſame affections are weaned from an undeſerving object, and pour'd out in amorous language upon an object ſupremely worthy and divine. But neither has this reproach any pretence in the preſent caſe: that happy pair had ſouls ſo near a-kin to each other, that they perſever'd in uncommon amity and mutual ſatisfaction, ſo long as providence favour'd him with life. 'Tis ſufficiently evident then, that in theſe meditations there is no ſecret panting after a mortal love in the language of devotion and piety.

Nor yet can it be objected, that it was any diſplicence and peeviſhneſs toward other things round about her, that taught her to expreſs herſelf with ſuch contempt of the things of mortality, and all the gay and tempting ſcenes of the preſent ſtate: ſhe

was

was by no means ſour and moroſe, and out of humour with the world, nor with her acquaintance that dwelt in it: ſhe often converſed freely with the gay and the great, and was in high eſteem among perſons of rank and honour. But honour and rank among mortals, with all the ſcenes of gaiety and greatneſs, were little, deſpicable, and forgotten things, while, in her devout moments, her eyes and her heart were fixed upon God, the ſupreme original of all excellence and all honour.

In common life ſhe was affable and friendly with perſons of every rank and degree; and in her latter years, as ſhe drew nearer to heaven, if ſhe avoided any thing, it was grandeur and public appearances on earth. But ſhe never ſo conceal'd and abſtracted herſelf from the ſociety of any of her fellow-creatures, as deſpiſe the meaneſt of her ſpecies. She was ever kind and compaſſionate to the diſtreſſed, and largely liberal to the indigent. Nor did ſhe neglect the daily duties of human life, under a vain imagination that ſhe moved in a higher ſphere, and was ſeraphically exalted above them.

In ſhort, there is nothing in theſe papers that can juſtly ſupport any ſuch ſort of cen-

ſures, though men of corrupt minds may cover the Bible itſelf with ſlander and ridicule. Let all ſuch readers ſtand aloof, nor touch theſe ſacred leaves, leaſt they pollute them.

Though there is not one complete copy of verſes amongſt all theſe tranſports of her ſoul, yet ſhe ever carried with her a reliſh of poeſy even into her ſacred retirements. Sometimes ſhe ſprings her flight from a line or two of verſe, which her memory had impreſs'd upon her heart: ſometimes from the midſt of her religious elevations, ſhe lights down upon a few lines of ſome modern poet, even Herbert *as well as* Milton, *&c. though 'tis but ſeldom ſhe cites their names. At other times, the verſes ſeem to be the effuſion of her own rapturous thoughts in ſudden melody and metre; or at leaſt I know not whence the lines are copy'd: but ſhe moſt frequently does me the honour to make uſe of ſome of my writings, in verſe, in theſe holy meditations of her heart. Bleſſed be that God, who has ſo far favour'd any thing my pen could produce, as to aſſiſt ſo ſublime a devotion.*

From the different appearance of the paper and ink in ſome of theſe pieces, as well as from the early tranſcripts of ſeveral

of them among her friends, 'tis evident they were written in her younger days; others are of a much later original, though there is but one that bears a date, and that is April 30. 1735. They ſeem to have been penn'd at ſpecial ſeaſons and occaſions throughout the courſe of her life. A few of them bear the corrections or additions of her own pen, which diſcovers itſelf by a little difference of the hand-writing.

Though ſhe was never tempted away from our common Chriſtianity into the faſhionable apoſtacies of the age; yet I am well informed from many hands, that, in her later years, ſhe entered with more zeal and affection into ſome of the peculiar doctrines of the goſpel: and 'tis evident that ſome of theſe devotional pieces have a more evangelic turn than others; and probably moſt of thoſe were compoſed or corrected in the latter part of life. The oppoſition which has of late been made to ſome of theſe truths, gave occaſion to her further ſearch into them, and her zeal for them. However, I have placed theſe papers all as I found them pinned up in a wrapping-paper, though it is evident, from plain circumſtances, this is not the order in which

they were written, nor is that of any great importance.

Though these writings give us the aspirations of a devout soul in her holy retirements, when she had no design to present the public with them; yet they did not want a great deal of adjustment or correction, in order to see the light. The numbers and the titles are added by the publisher, as well as the breaks and pauses, which give a sort of rest to the reader's mind, and make the review more easy. Here and there a too venturous flight is a little moderated; sometimes a meditation or a sentence is completed, which seemed very imperfect, or a short line or two inserted, to introduce the sense where the language seemed too abrupt, or the meaning too obscure. Her soul had a large set of ideas in present view, which made every expression she used easy and perspicuous to herself when she wrote only for her own use; though sometimes her entire sense might not be quite so obvious to every reader, without a little introduction into her track of sentiments. Upon the whole, I must acknowledge I was very unwilling that this excellent work should lose any degrees of elegance or brightness, by passing through my hands.

When

When the manuſcript came firſt under my reviſal, I read it over with the eye of a critic and a friend, that I might publiſh it with honour to the hand that wrote it, and with religious entertainment and advantage to the world: nor was this employment deſtitute of its proper ſatisfaction. But never did I feel the true pleaſure of theſe meditations, till I had finiſhed this labour of the head, *and began to read them over again, as* devout exerciſes of the heart: *then I endeavour'd to enter more entirely into the ſpirit of the pious author, and attempted to aſſume her language as my own. But how much ſuperior was the ſatisfaction which I received from this review, eſpecially whereſoever I had reaſon to hope I could pronounce her words with ſincerity of ſoul? How happily did this raiſe and entertain all my pleaſing paſſions, and give me another ſort of delight, than the dry critical peruſal of them, in order to judge concerning their propriety? But I confeſs alſo, it was an abaſing and mortifying thought, when I found how often I was conſtrained to drop the ſublime expreſſion from my lips, or forbid my tongue to uſe it, becauſe my own attainments ſunk ſo far beneath thoſe ſacred elevations of ſpirit, and*

fell ſo ſhort of thoſe tranſcendent degrees of divine affection and zeal.

Let me perſuade all that peruſe this book, to make the ſame experiment that I have done; and when they have ſhut out the world, and are reading in their retirements, let them try how far they can ſpeak this language, and aſſume theſe ſentiments as their own: and, by aſpiring to follow them, may they find the ſame ſatisfaction and delight, or at leaſt learn the profitable leſſons of ſelf-abaſement and holy ſhame: And may a noble and glorious ambition excite in their breaſts a ſacred zeal to emulate ſo illuſtrious an example. Whatſoever ardours of divine love have been kindled in a ſoul united to fleſh and blood, may alſo be kindled by the ſame influences of grace in other ſpirits, labouring under the ſame clogs and impediments.

But, perhaps, it will be neceſſary here to give a caution to ſome humble Chriſtians, that they would not make theſe higher elevations of piety and holy joy the teſt and ſtandard by which to judge of the ſincerity of their own religion. Ten thouſand ſaints are arrived ſafe at paradiſe, who have not been favoured, like St Paul, *with a rapture into the third heaven, nor could ever*

ariſe

ariſe to the affectionate tranſports, and devout joys of Mrs Rowe: *Yet I hope all ſerious readers may find ſomething here, which, thro' the aids of the bleſſed Spirit, may raiſe them above their uſual pitch, may give a new ſpring to their religious pleaſures, and their immortal hopes, and thereby render their lives more holy and heavenly.*

That the publication of this little book may be favour'd with the divine bleſſing for this happy end, is the ſincere deſire and requeſt of the publiſher, as it was the real motive of the ingenious and pious writer to commit them, by my hand, to the public view. This ſufficiently diſcovers itſelf in the following letter.

To

To the REVEREND

Dr WATTS, at NEWINGTON.

SIR,

THE opinion I have of your piety and judgment, is the reaſon of my giving you the trouble of looking over theſe papers, in order to publiſh them; which I deſire you to do as ſoon as you can conveniently; only you have full liberty to ſuppreſs what you think proper.

I think there can be no vanity in this deſign, for I am ſenſible ſuch thoughts as theſe will not be for the taſte of the modiſh part of the world; and before they appear, I ſhall be entirely diſintereſted in the cenſure or applauſe of mortals.

The reflections were occaſionally written, and only for my own improvement; but I am not without hopes that they may have the ſame effect on ſome pious minds, as the reading experiences of others have had on my own ſoul. The experimental part of religion has generally a greater influence than its theory; and if, when I am ſleeping in the duſt, theſe ſoliloquies ſhould kindle a flame of divine love in the heart of the loweſt and moſt deſpiſed Chriſtian, be the glory given to the great Spring of all grace and benignity.

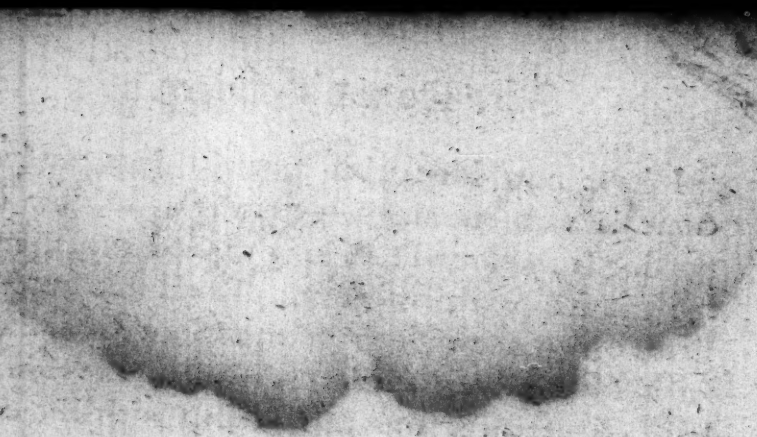
I have

I have now done with mortal things, and all to come is vaſt eternity——eternity——How tranſporting is the ſound! as long as God exiſts, my being and happineſs is ſecure. Theſe unbounded deſires, which the wide creation cannot limit, ſhall be ſatisfy'd for ever. I ſhall drink at the fountain-head of pleaſure, and be refreſh'd with the emanations of original life and joy. I ſhall hear the voice of uncreated harmony ſpeaking peace and ineffable conſolation to my ſoul.

I expect eternal life, not as a reward *(of merit)*, but a pure act of bounty. Deteſting myſelf in every view I can take, I fly to the righteouſneſs and attonement of my great Redeemer for pardon and ſalvation; this is my only conſolation and hope. *Enter not into judgment, O Lord, with thy ſervant; for in thy ſight ſhall no fleſh be juſtify'd.*

Thro' the blood of the Lamb, I hope for an entire victory over the laſt enemy; and that before this comes to you, I ſhall have reach'd the celeſtial heights; and while you are reading theſe lines, I ſhall be adoring before the throne of God, where faith ſhall be turn'd into viſion, and theſe languiſhing deſires ſatisfy'd with the full fruition of immortal love. Adieu.

ELIZ. ROWE.



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DEVOUT EXERCISES OF THE HEART, &c.

I. *Supreme Love to* GOD.

WHY, O my God, muſt this mortal ſtructure put ſo great a ſeparation between my ſoul and thee? I am ſurrounded with thy eſſence, yet I cannot perceive thee; I follow thee, and trace thy footſteps in heaven and earth, yet I cannot overtake thee; thou art before me, and I cannot reach thee; and behind me, and I perceive thee not.

O thou, whom unſeen, I love, by what powerful influence doſt thou attract my ſoul? The eye has not ſeen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what thou art; and yet I love thee beyond all that mine eye has ſeen, or my ear heard, beyond all that my heart can comprehend. Thou dwelleſt in heights of glory, to which no hu-

man thought can ſoar, and yet thou art more near and intimate to my ſoul than any of the objects of ſenſe. Theſe ears have never heard thy voice, and yet I am better acquainted with thee, and can rely on thee with more confidence, than on the deareſt friend I have on earth.

My heart cleaves to thee, O Lord, as its only refuge, and finds in thee a ſecret and conſtant ſpring of conſolation. I ſpeak to thee with the utmoſt confidence, and think thy being my greateſt happineſs. The reflection on thy exiſtence and greatneſs recreates my ſpirits, and fills my heart with alacrity; my ſoul overflows with pleaſure, I rejoice, I triumph in thy independent bleſſedneſs and abſolute dominion. Reign, O my God, for ever, glorious and uncontroul'd.

I, a worm of the earth, would join my aſſent with the infinite orders above, with all thy flaming miniſters who rejoice in thy kingdom and glory.

Tho' not with them, thy happier race, allow'd
To view the bright unveil'd divinity;
(By no audacious glance from mortal eyes,
Thoſe myſtic glories are to be profan'd)
But yet I feel the ſame immortal flame,
And love thee, tho' unſeen.

I love thee——Thus far I can ſpeak, but all the reſt is unutterable; and I muſt leave the pleaſing tale untold till I can talk in the language of immortality: and then I'll begin the tranſporting ſtory, which ſhall never come to an end, but be ſtill and ſtill beginning: for thy beauties, O thou faireſt of ten thouſand, will ſtill be new, and ſhall kindle freſh ardor in my ſoul to all eternity. The ſacred flame ſhall riſe, nor find any limits till thy perfections find a period.

I love thee, and O thou that knoweſt all things, read the characters that love has drawn on my heart: What excellence but thine, in heaven and earth, could raiſe ſuch aſpirations of ſoul, ſuch ſublime and fervent affections as thoſe I feel? What could fix my ſpirit but boundleſs perfection? What is there elſe for whoſe ſake I could deſpiſe all created glory? Why am I not at reſt here among ſenſible enjoyments? Whence ariſe theſe importunate longings, theſe infinite deſires? Why does not the complete creation ſatisfy, or at leaſt delude with a dream of happineſs? Why do not the objects of ſenſe awake a more ardent ſentiment than things diſtant and invi-

ſible? Why ſhould I, who *ſay to corruption, thou art my father,* aſpire after an union with the immenſe divinity?

You angels of God, that behold his face, explain to me the ſacred myſtery; tell me how this heavenly flame began, unriddle its wondrous generation: who hath animated this mortal frame with celeſtial fire, and given a clod of earth this divine ambition? what could kindle it but the breath of God, which kindled up my ſoul? and to thee, its amiable original, it aſcends; it breaks through all created perfection, and keeps on its reſtleſs courſe to the firſt pattern of beauty.

Ye flow'ry varieties of the earth, and you ſparkling glories of the ſkies, your blandiſhments are vain, while I purſue an excellence that caſts a reproach on all your glory. I would fain cloſe my eyes on all the various and lovely appearances you preſent, and would open them on a brighter ſcene. I have deſires which nothing viſible can gratify; to which no material things are ſuitable. O when ſhall I find objects more entirely agreeable to my intellectual faculties? My ſoul ſprings forward in purſuit of a diſtant good,

good, whom I follow by ſome faint ray of light, which only glimmers by ſhort intervals before me. O when will it diſperſe the clouds, and break out in full ſplendor on my ſoul?

But what will the open viſion of thy beauties effect, if, while thou art but faintly imagin'd, I love thee with ſuch a ſacred fervour? To what bleſſed heights ſhall my admiration riſe, when I ſhall behold thee in full perfection; when I ſhall ſee thee as thou art, exalted in majeſty, and complete in beauty? How ſhall I triumph then in thy glory, and in the privileges of my own being? What ineffable thoughts will riſe, to find myſelf united to the all-ſufficient Divinity, by ties which the ſons of men have no names to expreſs, by an engagement that the revolution of eternal years ſhall not diſſolve? The league of nature ſhall be broken, and the laws of the mingled elements be cancell'd; but my relation to the almighty God ſhall ſtand fixed and unchangeable as his own exiſtence: *nor life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, ſhall ever ſeparate me from his love.*

Triumph, O my ſoul, and rejoice; look forward beyond the period of all terreſtrial things: look beyond ten thouſand ages of celeſtial bleſſedneſs; look forward ſtill, and make an immeaſurable proſpect; preſs on, and leave unnumber'd ages behind, ages of ineffable peace and pleaſure; plunge at once into the ocean of bleſs, and call eternity itſelf thy own.

There are no limits to the proſpect of my joy; it runs parallel with the duration of the infinite Divinity: my bleſs is without bounds; O when ſhall the full poſſeſſion of it commence!

II. *The truth and goodneſs of* GOD.

ENGRAV'D as in eternal braſs,
The mighty promiſe ſhines;
No can the powers of darkneſs raze
Thoſe everlaſting lines.
The ſacred word of grace is ſtrong
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the ſtars along
Speaks all the promiſes.

And they all are built on the immutable truth and goodneſs of thy nature: thou doſt not ſpeak at random like vain man; but whatever thou haſt engag'd to perform,

perform, is the reſult of eternal counſel and deſign. Thou haſt utter'd nothing that thou canſt ſee occaſion to alter on a ſecond review: thou canſt promiſe nothing to thy own damage, nor be a loſer by the utmoſt liberality. Thou art every way qualified to make good thy engagements, by the fullneſs of thy riches and power.

Nor haſt thou any neceſſity to flatter thy creatures, or to ſay kinder things to them than thou meaneſt to fulfil. Miſerable man can bring no advantage to thee, nor has he any thing to claim from thee. By what benefit has he prevented thee? By what right can he demand the leaſt of thy favours? Thy engagements are all free and unconſtrain'd, founded on thy own beneficence, and not on the merits of thy creature. While I conſider this, my expectations riſe, I ſet no limits to my hopes: I look up with confidence, and call thee *my Father*, and, with a humble faith, I claim every advantage that tender name imports. My heart confides in thee with ſtedfaſtneſs and alacrity; fear and diſtruſt are inconſiſtent with my thoughts of the beneficence of thy nature.

Every name and attribute by which thou

thou haſt reveal'd thyſelf to man confirms my faith. Thy life, thy being is engaged: I may as well queſtion thy exiſtence, as thy faithfulneſs: as ſure as thou art, thou art juſt and true. The proteſtation of the moſt faithful friend I have, cannot give me half the conſolation that thy promiſes give me. I hear vain man with diffidence, I bid my ſoul beware of truſting falſe mortality; but I hear thy voice with joy and full aſſurance.

Thy words are not writ in ſand, nor ſcatter'd by the fleeting winds; but ſhall ſtand in force when heaven and earth ſhall be no more. Eternal ages ſhall not diminiſh their efficacy, nor alter what the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken. I believe, I believe with the moſt perfect aſſent: I know that *thou art, and that thou art a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek thee*; I feel the evidence, for thou haſt not left thyſelf without witneſs in my heart.

III. *Longing after the enjoyment of* GOD.

MY God, to thee my ſighs aſcends; every complaint I make, ends with thy name: I pauſe, I dwell on the ſound, I ſpeak it over again, and find that all my

my cares begin and end in thee. I long to behold the ſupreme beauty, I pant for the fair original of all that is lovely, for beauty that is yet unknown, and for intellectual pleaſures yet untaſted.

My heart aſpires, my wiſhes fly beyond the bounds of creation, and deſpiſe all that mortality can preſent me with. I was form'd for celeſtial joys, and find myſelf capable of the entertainments of angels. Why may I not begin my heaven below, and taſte at leaſt of the ſprings of pleaſure that flow from thy right-hand for ever?

Should I drink my fill, thoſe fountains are ſtill exhauſtleſs; millions of happy ſouls quench their infinite deſires there; millions of happy orders of beings gaze on thy beauty, and are made partakers of thy bleſſedneſs; but thou art ſtill undiminiſh'd. No liberality can waſte the ſtore of thy perfection; it has flow'd from eternity, and runs for ever freſh, and why muſt I periſh for want.

My thirſty ſoul pines for the waters of life: Oh! who will refreſh me with the pleaſurable draught? How long ſhall I wander in this deſart land, where every proſpect is waſte and barren? I look round

round me in vain, and ſigh ſtill unſatiſfied: Oh! who will lead me to the ſtill waters, and make me repoſe in green paſtures, where the weary are for ever at reſt? How tedious are the hours of expectation?

Come, Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is ſick,
While thou doſt ever, ever ſtay;
Thy long deferring wounds me to the quick,
My ſpirit gaſpeth night and day:
O ſhew thyſelf to me,
Or take me up to thee.

Diſpatch thy commiſſions; give me my work, and activity to perform it, and let me, as an hireling, fulfil my day. Lord 'tis enough: *What am I better than my fathers?* they are dead, and I am mortal.

I'm but a ſtranger and a pilgrim here
In theſe wild regions, wand'ring and forlorn;
Reſtleſs and ſighing for my native home,
Longing to reach my weary ſpace of life,
And to fulfil my task. Oh! haſte the hour
Of joy and ſweet repoſe. Tranſporting hope!

Lord, here I am waiting for thy commands, attending thy pleaſure; O ſpeak and incline my ear to hear; give me my work, let me finiſh it, and gain my diſmiſſion from this body of ſin and death;

this

this hated clog of error and guilt, of corruption and vanity. Oh! let me drop this load, and bid theſe ſcenes of guilt a final adieu.

I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord; when wilt thou let me into thy holy habitation? How long ſhall I pine at this diſtance from thee? What can I ſpeak to ſhew thee my pain, to utter my anguiſh, when I fear the loſs of my God? Oh! ſpeak an aſſuring word, and confirm my hope.

Tranſporting moment! when wilt thou appear,
To crown my hopes, and baniſh all my fear.

Again, O my Father, and my eternal Friend, I breathe out my requeſts to thee in this land of fatigue and folly! What is this life but a ſorry tireſome round, a circle of repeated vanities? Happineſs has been never ſeen in it ſince ſin and folly entered; all is empty appearance, or vain labour, or painful vexation.

Suffic'd with life, my languid ſpirits faint,
And fain would be at reſt. Oh! let me enter
Thoſe ſacred ſeats, and after all the toil
Of life, begin an everlaſting ſabbath.

Yet again, O Lord, I ask leave to tell thee, I have *waited for thy ſalvation*, and hourly

hourly languiſh'd after the habitations of my God. My heart grows ſick, and I almoſt expire under theſe delays. What have I here to keep me from thee? What to relieve the tedious hours of abſence? I have pronounc'd all below the ſun, vanity and vexation; all inſipid and burthenſome. Amidſt health and plenty, friends and reputation, thou art my only joy, my higheſt wiſh, and my ſupreme delight. On thee my ſoul fixes all her hopes; there I reſt in a celeſtial calm! Oh! let it not be broken with earthly objects; let me live unmoleſted with the cares or delights of ſenſe.

Oh! let me flee
From all the world, and live alone to THEE.

IV. GOD *my ſupreme, my only hope.*

WHY do I addreſs thee, my God, with no more confidence? Why do I indulge theſe remains of unbelief, and harbour theſe returns of infidelity and diſtruſt? Can I ſurvey the earth, can I gaze on the ſtructure of the heavens, and ask if thou art able to deliver? Can I call in queſtion thy ability to ſuccour me, when I conſider the general and particular

ticular inſtances of thy goodneſs and power? One age to another, in long ſucceſſion, hath convey'd the records of thy glory. *In all generations thou haſt been our dwelling-place, my fathers truſted in thee, and were deliver'd.* They have encouraged me, my own experience has encouraged me, to truſt in thee for ever.

The ſun may fail to riſe, and men in vain expect its light; but thy truth, thy faithfulneſs cannot fail: the courſe of nature may be reverſed, and all be chaos again; but thou art immutable, and canſt not, by any change, deceive the hopes of them that truſt in thee. I adore thy power, and ſubſcribe to thy goodneſs and fidelity, and what farther objection would my unbelief raiſe? Is any thiug too hard for God to accompliſh? Can the united force of earth and hell reſiſt his will?

Great God, how wide thy glories ſhine!
How broad thy kingdom, how divine!
Nature and miracle, and fate and chance are thine.

Therefore I apply myſelf immediately to thee, and renounce all the terror, and all the confidence that may ariſe from heaven or earth beſides.

Not from the duſt my joys or ſorrows ſpring:
Let all the baleful planets ſhade
Their mingled curſes round my head;
Their mingled curſes I deſpiſe,
Let but the great, th' eternal King.
Look through the clouds, and bleſs me with his eyes.

Let him bleſs me, and I ſhall be bleſſed; bleſs'd without reſerve or limitation; bleſs'd in my going out and coming in; in my ſitting down and riſing up; bleſs'd in time, and bleſs'd to all eternity. That bleſſing from thy lips will influence the whole creation, and attend me where-ever I am. It ſhall go before me as a leading light, and follow me as my protecting angel. When I lie down it will cover me, I ſhall reſt beneath the ſhadow of the Moſt High, and dwell ſafely in the ſecrets of his tabernacle.

Thy kingdom ruleth over all, O Lord, and thou *doſt according to thy will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth:* I confeſs and acknowledge thy providence. The ways of man are not at his own diſpoſal, but all his goings are ordered by thee; all events are in thy hands, and thou only canſt ſucceed or diſappoint his hopes. If thou blow on his deſigns, they are for ever blaſted;

blaſted; if thou bleſs them, neither earth nor hell can hinder their ſucceſs: therefore I apply myſelf immediately to thee; for not all created power can aſſiſt me without thee.

Hence from my heart, ye idols flee,
Ye ſounding names of vanity!
No more my tongue ſhall ſacrifice
To chance and nature, tales and lies;
Creatures without a God can yield me no ſupplies.

Not all the power of men on earth, nor angels nor ſaints in heaven, can help or relieve me in the leaſt exigence, if my God hide himſelf, and ſtand afar off from me. Second cauſes are all at thy direction, and cannot aid me till commiſſion'd by thee.

Lord, when my thoughtful ſoul ſurveys
Fire, air, and earth, and ſtars and ſeas,
I call them all thy ſlaves;
Commiſſion'd by my father's will,
Poiſon ſhall cure, or balms ſhall kill;
Vernal ſuns or zephyrs breath
May burn or blaſt the plants to death
That ſharp *December* ſaves.
What can winds or planets boaſt;
But a precarious power?
The ſun is all in darkneſs loſt,
Froſt ſhall be fire, and fire be froſt,
When he appoints the hour.

At thy command, nature and neceſſity are no more; all things are alike eaſy to a God: ſpeak but thou the word, and my deſires are granted: ſay, *Let there be light*, and there ſhall be light. Thou canſt look me into peace, when the tumult of thoughts raiſe a ſtorm within. Bid my ſoul be ſtill, and all its tempeſt ſhall obey thee.

I depend only on thee; do thou ſmile, and all the world may frown: do thou ſucceed my affairs, and I ſhall fear no obſtacle that earth and hell can put in my way. Thou only art the object of my fear, and all my deſires are directed to thee.

Human things have loſt their being and their names, and vaniſh into nothing before thee; they are but ſhades and diſguiſes to vail the active divinity. Oh! let me break through all theſe ſeparations, and ſee and confeſs the great, the governing cauſe. Let no appearance of created things, however ſpecious, hide thee from my view; let me look through all to thee, nor caſt a glance of love or hope below thee. With a holy contempt let me ſurvey the ample round of the creation, as lying in the hollow

hollow of thy hand, and every being in heaven and on earth, as immoveable by the moſt potent cauſe in nature, till commiſſion'd by thee to do good or hurt. Oh! let thy hand be with me to keep me from evil, and let me abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty: I ſhall be ſecure in thy pavilion. To thee I fly for ſhelter from all the ills of mortality.

V. GOD *a preſent help, and ever near.*

THOU waſt found of me, O my God, when I ſought thee not, and wilt thou fly me when I ſeek thee? Am I giving my breath to the wind, and ſcattering my petitions in the air? Is it a vain thing to call upon God, and is there no profit in crying to the almighty? *Art thou a God afar off, and not near at hand?* Is there any place exempt from thy preſence? Any diſtance whence my cries cannot reach thee! Can any darkneſs hide me from thy eyes? or is there a corner of the creation unviſited by thee? Doſt thou not fill heaven and earth, and am I not ſurrounded by thy immenſity?

Are my deſires unknown to thee? or is there a thought in my heart conceal'd from theee? Doſt not thou that haſt form'd the ear, hear? Canſt thou forget the work of thy own hands? or retired far in the heavens, full of thy own happineſs, canſt thou leave thy creation to miſery and diſorder, helpleſs and hopeleſs? Are the ways of man at his own diſpoſal, and his paths undirected by thee? Is calling on the living God no more than worſhipping a dumb idol? Canſt thou, like them, diſappoint and mock thy adorers?

Art thou unacquainted with the extent of thy own power, that thou ſhouldſt promiſe beyond thy ability to perform? Or art thou *as a man that ſhouldſt lie; or the ſon of man that ſhouldſt repent?* Is thy faithfulneſs uncertain, and thy power precarious? Are thoſe perfections imaginary for which men adore thee, and thy gracious names inſignificant titles? Do the *children of men* in vain *put their truſt under the ſhadow of thy wings?* Art not thou *a preſent help in the time of trouble*, and is there no ſecurity in the ſecret places of the Moſt High? Whither then ſhall I look in my diſtreſs? To whom

ſhall I direct my prayer? From whom ſhall I expect relief, if there is no help in God for me?

But, Oh! what unrighteouſneſs have my fathers ever found in thee? What injuſtice can I charge thee with? What breach of truth, or want of pity? Have the records of thy actions ever been ſtained with the breach of faithfulneſs? Art thou not my only hope, and my long-experienc'd ſupport? Have I ever found help from the creatures when thou haſt fail'd me? Have I, or can I have, a greater certainty than thy word to depend on? Can any other power defend or deliver like thee? Thou art *a rock, and thy work is perfect*, for *all thy ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right art thou.* With my laſt breath I will witneſs to thy truth and faithfulneſs, and declare thy goodneſs to the children of men.

VI. GOD *an all-ſufficient good, and my only happineſs.*

WHY is my heart ſo far from thee,
My God, my chief delight?
Why are my thoughts no more by day
With thee no more by night?

Why

Why ſhould my fooliſh paſſions rove?
Where can ſuch ſweetneſs be
As I have taſted in thy love,
As I have found in thee?

Where can I hope to meet ſuch joys as thy ſmiles have given me? Where can I find pleaſure ſo ſincere and unallay'd? When I have enjoy'd the light of thy countenance, and the ſenſe of thy love, has not all my ſoul been fill'd? Have I found any want or emptineſs? Has there been any room left for deſire, or any proſpect beyond, beſides the more perfect enjoyment of my God? Have not all the glories of the world been darkened, and turned into blackneſs and deformity? How poor, how contemptible have they appear'd, or rather have they not all diſappear'd and vaniſh'd as dreams and ſhadows in the noon of day, and under the blaze of ſun-beams?

I have never found ſatisfaction in any thing but in God; why then do I wander from him? Why do I leave the fountain of living water for broken ciſterns? Why do I abandon the full ocean in ſearch of ſhallow ſtreams? What account can I give for folly like this? I can promiſe myſelf nothing from the creature;

creature; thoſe expectations ſhall deceive me no more. 'Tis thou my God, thou art the only object of my hopes and deſires; 'tis thou only that canſt make me happy.

If thou frown, my being is a curſe: thy indignation is hell with all its terrors. Let me never feel that, and I defy all things elſe to make me miſerable. I ſeem independent on all nature, to thee only I apply myſelf. Hear me thou beneficent author of my being, thou ſupport of my life, to thee I direct my wiſhes, thoſe deſires which thou wilt approve, while I ask but the happineſs I was created to enjoy. O! fix all my expectation on thee, and free me from this levity and inconſtancy.

Look gently down, Almighty grace,
Priſon me round in thy embrace;
Pity the heart that would be thine,
And let thy power my love confine.

Suffer me never to ſtart from thee; ſuch a confinement were ſweeter than liberty: *Thy yoke is eaſy, and thy burden light.* I ſhall bleſs the chain that binds me to thee. Oh! give me ſuch a view of thy beauty, I ſhall fix my volatile

heart

heart for ever; ſuch a view as ſhall determine all its motions, and be a conſtant conviction how unreaſonable it is to wander from thee.

Is it that I reliſh any thing beyond thy love? Oh! no. I appeal even to thee, who canſt not be deceived, and knoweſt the inmoſt ſecrets of my ſoul: thou knoweſt where the balance of my love falls, and that my wanderings are not deliberate; that 'tis not by choice that I forſake thee. I grieve, I ſigh for my folly; ſhouldſt thou forgive me, I can never forgive myſelf, for I know 'tis inexcuſable.

I want nothing when I am poſſeſs'd of thee; without thee I want all things. Thou art the centre of all my paſſions; I have no hope but what is thine, no joy but what flows from thee: my greateſt fears are thoſe of loſing thee; my inmoſt care is to ſecure thy favour. This is the ſubject of my deepeſt anxiety: every ſigh I breathe ends in thy name, and that lov'd name alone allays every anguiſh of my ſoul, and calms its wildeſt tempeſts.

From thy frowns or favour, all my joys or ſorrows ſpring; thy frowns can make me infinitely miſerable, thy favour can make

make me infinitely bleſſed. I can defy hell, and ſmile in the face of death, whilſt I can call thee *mine*. My God! ſtill let me bleſs the ſound, and part with all things rather than renounce my propriety in thee: let me hold it to my laſt breath, and claim it with my expiring ſighs.

Secure of thee, nothing can terrify my ſoul; all is peaceable and ſerene within, eternal love and immortal pleaſure: I deſire no more; imagination ſtops here, and all my wiſhes are loſt in eternal plenty.—My God! more cannot be aſked, and with leſs I ſhould be infinitely miſerable. The kingdoms of the ſkies ſhould not buy my title to thee and thy love: the bleſſedneſs of all creatures is complete here, for God himſelf is bleſſed in himſelf for ever.

What can I add? for all my words are faint,
Celeſtial love no eloquence can paint;
No more can be in mortal ſounds expreſs'd,
But vaſt eternity ſhall tell the reſt.

VII. *A covenant with* GOD.

Incomprehenſible Being, who *ſearcheſt the heart, and trieſt the reins of the children*

children of men, thou knoweſt my ſincerity, and my thoughts are all unveil'd to thee; I am ſurrounded with thine immenſity; thou art a preſent, though inviſible witneſs of the ſolemn affair I am now engaged in. I am now *taking hold of thy ſtrength, that I may make peace with thee*, and entering into articles with the Almighty God: theſe are the happy days long ſince predicted, when *one ſhall ſay I am the Lord's, and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of* Iſrael, *and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand to the Lord*; and *I will be their God, and they ſhall be my ſons and my daughters, ſaith the Lord* Jehovah.

With the moſt thankful ſincerity I take hold on this covenant, as 'tis more fully manifeſted and explained in thy goſpel by *Jeſus Chriſt*; and humbly accepting thy propoſals, I bind myſelf to thee by a ſacred and everlaſting obligation. By a free and deliberate action, I do here ratify the articles which were made for me in my baptiſm into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; I religiouſly devote myſelf to thy ſervice, and entirely ſubmit to thy conduct. I renounce the glories

and

and vanities of the world, and chuſe thee as my happineſs, my ſupreme felicity, and everlaſting portion. I make no article with thee for any thing beſides: deny or give me what thou wilt I will never repine, while my principal treaſure is ſecure. This is my deliberate, my free and ſincere determination, a determination which, by thy grace, I will never retract.

Oh! thou, by whoſe power alone I ſhall be able to ſtand, *put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee*: let not the world, with all its flatteries, nor death nor hell with all their terrors, force me to violate this ſacred vow. Oh! let me never live to abandon thee, nor draw the impious breath that would deny thee.

And now let ſurrounding angels witneſs for me, that I ſolemnly devote all the powers and faculties of my ſoul to thy ſervice; and when I preſumptuouſly employ any of the advantages thou haſt given me, to thy diſhonour, let them teſtify againſt me, and let my own words condemn me.

ELISABETH ROWE.

Thus have I ſubſcribed to thy gracious propoſals, and engaged myſelf to be the Lord's: and now let the malice of men, and the rage of devils, combine againſt me, I can defy all their ſtratagems; for *God* himſelf is become my friend, *Jeſus* is my all-ſufficient Saviour, and the *Spirit of God*, I truſt, will be my ſanctifier and comforter.

O happy day! tranſporting moment! the brighteſt period of my life! heaven with all its light ſmiles on thee: what glorious mortal can now excite my envy! What ſcene to tempt my ambition could the whole creation diſplay? Let glory call me with her exalted voice? Let pleaſure, with a ſofter eloquence allure me? The world, in all its ſplendour, appears but a trifle, while the infinite God is my portion. He is mine, by as ſure a title as eternal veracity can confer: the right is unqueſtionable, the conveyance unalterable, the mountains ſhall be remov'd, and the hills be diſſolv'd, before the everlaſting obligation ſhall be cancell'd.

VIII. *A thank-offering for ſaving grace.*

BLESS the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name: bleſs the Lord, and forget not all his benefits, who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindneſs and tender mercy; who brought thee out of the mire and clay, and ſet thy feet upon a rock; who broke thy fetters, and freed thee from the miſerable bondage of ſin. I lay a wretched ſlave, pleas'd with my chains, and fond of my captivity, fatally deluded and undone, till love, almighty love, reſcued me. Bleſt effect of unmerited grace! I ſhall ſtand for ever an illuſtrious inſtance of boundleſs mercy: to that I muſt entirely aſcribe my ſalvation, and through all the ages of eternity, I'll rehearſe the wonders of redeeming love, and tell to liſtening angels what it has done for my ſoul.

I'll ſing the endleſs miracles of love;
For ever that my lofty theme ſhall prove.

My glorious Creator, why did I employ thy thoughts before I had a being? Why from all eternity was an immorta-

lity deſigned me, and my birth allotted me in a land illuminated with the rays of ſacred light? I might have been invoking the powers of hell with deteſtable ceremonies, inſtead of adoring the omnipotent God; but when thouſands are loſt in theſe deluſions, why am I thus graciouſly diſtinguiſhed? Inſtead of being born among the ſhameful vices of impious parents, and an heir to their curſes, why am I intitled to the bleſſing of religious anceſtors? Why, when I was incapable of choice, was I devoted to the God that *keeps covenant and mercy to a thouſand generations of them that fear him?*

Why, when I knew thee not, didſt thou ſuſtain me? But Oh! why, when I knew thee, and rebelled againſt thee, why didſt thou ſo long ſuffer my ingratitude? Why did thy watchful providence perpetually ſurround me, croſſing all the methods I took to undo myſelf? Why was I not curſed with my own wiſhes, and left to the quiet poſſeſſion of thoſe vanities I delighted in; thoſe toys which I fooliſhly preferr'd to all the treaſures of thy love? Why didſt thou purſue me with the offers of thy favour, when I fled thee with ſuch averſion; and had fled thee

for

for ever, if thou hadſt not compell'd me to return?

Why did thy Spirit ſtrive ſo long with an obſtinate heart, which reſiſted all its motions, and turned thy patience and long-ſuffering into provocation and guilt? Why am I not undone by thoſe pleaſing ſnares in which I have ſeen ſo many deluded wretches periſh? Like them I deſpiſe the unſearchable riches of thy grace; with them I had been content to ſhare the ſorry portion and pleaſures of this world, if thou hadſt let me alone, and I ſhould never have inquired after thee: But why waſt thou found of one that ſought thee not? O why, but *becauſe thou wilt be merciful to whom thou wilt be merciful?*

Therefore again with aſtoniſhment and delight, I look back on the methods of thy grace; and again I conſider myſelf loſt in an abyſs of ſin and miſery; when there was no eye to pity me, no hand but thine to aſſiſt me, thou madeſt it then the time of love. Never was grace more free and ſurpriſing than thine is; never was there a more obſtinate heart than mine; and never ſuch unconquerable love as thine. How glorioufly has it tri-

umphed over my rebellious faculties? How freely has it cancelled all my guilt?

Could I have made the leaſt pretence to merit, or have challenged any thing from thee, the benefit had been exalted: had there been any leſs foundation for human pride, my corrupt heart would ſoon have taken the advantage, and have robb'd thee of thy honour, by aſcribing the glorious work to the ſtrength of my own reaſon, or a natural tendency to virtue; but here my vanity is for ever ſilenced. I am loſt in the boundleſs abyſs. O height! O depth! O length and breadth immeaſurable! *How unſearchable are thy ways*, Almighty Love, *and thy paths paſt finding out?*

Let me here begin my eternal ſong, and aſcribe *ſalvation and honour*, dominion and majeſty, *to him that ſits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever*, who has loved me, and ranſomed me with his blood; ranſomed me from a voluntary bondage, from the moſt vile and hopeleſs captivity, a captivity from which nothing but that unvaluable purchaſe could have redeemed me.

"Infinite love! almighty grace!
"Stand in amaze, ye rolling ſkies!"

Bring

Bring hither your celeſtial harps, ye beneficent beings, who amidſt the height of your happineſs expreſs a kind regard for man: teach me the language of paradiſe, the ſtrains of immortality. But Oh! 'tis all too feeble, the tongues of ſeraphim cannot utter what I owe my Redeemer: from what miſery, my adorable Saviour, haſt thou reſcuſed me? From error, from ſin, from ſnares and death, from infernal chains, eternal horrour, and the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.

Nor here my glorious Benefactor ſtay'd; but ſtill went on to magnify the riches of his grace, and intitled me to an endleſs inheritance, and an immortal crown; to the fruition of God, and the unutterable joys that flow from his preſence.

Myſterious depths of boundleſs love
My admiration raiſe:
O God, thy name exalted ſtands
Above my higheſt praiſe.

IX. *Evidence of ſincere love to* GOD.

IF I love thee, not, my bleſſed God, I know not what I love: if I am uncertain of this, I am uncertain of my exiſtence: if I love thee not, what is the meaning

meaning of theſe pathetic expreſſions, MY GOD, MY ALL! thou ſpring of my life, and fountain of my happineſs! my great reward, and my exceeding joy; the eternal object of my love, and ſupreme felicity of my nature! Does not my heart attend my lips in all this language? How can this be, if my ſoul does not love thee?

O my God, if I love thee not, what is the meaning of this conſtant uneaſineſs at thy abſence? From whence proceeds this painful anxiety of mind about thy love, and all theſe intenſe, theſe reſtleſs deſires after thee? Why are all the ſatisfactions of life inſipid without thee? Without my God what are riches, and honours, and pleaſures to me? I ſhould eſteem the poſſeſſion of the world but a trifle, or rather my eternal damage, if it muſt be purchaſed with the loſs of thy favour. Thy benignity is better than life, and the moments in which I enjoy a ſenſe of thy love, are the only happy intervals of my life. 'Tis then I live; 'tis then I am truly bleſs'd: 'tis then I look down with contempt on the little amuſements of the world, and pity them

that

that want a taſte for theſe exalted pleaſures.

How calm, how peaceful, in thoſe ſeaſons, are all the regions of my ſoul! I have enough, I ask no more. Can they languiſh for the ſtream, who drink at the overflowing fountain? I have all the world and more; I have heaven itſelf in thee: in thee I am completely and ſecurely bleſs'd, and can defy the malice of earth and hell, to ſhake the foundation of my happineſs, while thou doſt whiſper thy love to my ſoul. O bleſſed ſtability of heart! O ſublime ſatisfaction! Haſt thou not told me, that thou art mine by an inviolable engagement, when my ſoul devoted itſelf ſincerely to thee? Does not thy word aſſure me, *that the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed; but thy kindneſs ſhall not depart, nor the covenant of thy peace be broken?*

Haſt not thou terminated my wiſhes, O Lord, in thyſelf, and fixed my wandering deſires? Is it for riches or honour, for length of days, or pleaſure, that I follow thee with daily importunities? Thou knoweſt theſe are not the ſubject of my reſtleſs petitions: do I ever balance theſe toys with thy favour?

Oh

Oh no: one ſmile of thine obſcures all their glory. When thou doſt bleſs my retired devotions with thy preſence, I can wink all created beauty into blackneſs. When I meet thee in my ſolitary contemplations, with what contempt do I look back on the leſſening world.

How dazzling is thy beauty! how divine!
How dim the luſtre of the world to thine!

How dull are its entertainments to the pleaſure of converſing with thee? Oh ſtay, in thoſe happy moments, cries my ſatisfied ſoul.

Stay, my beloved, with me here;
Stay till the morning-ſtar appear;
Stay till the dusky ſhadows fly
Before the day's illuſtrious eye.

Oh! ſtay till the gloomy night of life is paſt, and eternity drawn on my ſoul. There's nothing in this barren place to entertain me when thou art gone: I can reliſh nothing below after theſe celeſtial banquets.

If I love thee not, what's the meaning of this impatience to be with thee? *My ſoul longeth, yea fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; when ſhall I come and appear before*

before thee? Oh! that I had the wings of a dove; for then would I fly away and be at reſt.

X. *Aſſurances of ſalvation in* Chriſt Jeſus.

I Have put my treaſure, my immortal part, into thy hands, Oh! my dear Redeemer, and *ſhall the prey be taken from the mighty?* ſhall a ſoul conſecrated to thee fall a ſacrifice to hell?

Bleſſed God, am I not thine? And ſhall the temple of thy ſpirit be profan'd, and the lips that have ſo often aſcribed dominion, and glory, and majeſty to thee, be defiled with infernal blaſphemy, and the execrations of the damn'd? Shall the ſparks of divine love be extinguiſh'd, and immortal enmity ſucceed? And ſhall I, who was once bleſs'd with thy favour, become the object of thy wrath and indignation? Shall all the mighty things thou haſt done for my ſoul be forgotten? Shall all my vows, and thy own ſacred engagements be cancell'd? 'Tis all impoſſible; for *thou art not as man, that thou ſhouldſt lie; nor as the ſon of man, that thou ſhouldſt repent.*

Thou

Thou art engaged by thy own tremenduous name for my ſecurity: my God, and my father's God, from generation to generation thou haſt been our dwelling-place. I was devoted to thee in baptiſm by the ſolemn vows of my religious parents: my infant hands were early lifted up to thee, and I ſoon learned to know and acknowledge the God of my fathers. I have actually ſubſcrib'd with my hand to the Lord, and am thine by the moſt voluntary and deliberate obligations. The portion of *Jacob* is my joyful choice, nor need I fear loſing it while thy word is eſtabliſhed as the heavens.

The Lord, who made heaven, earth and ſea,
And all that they contain,
Will never quit his ſtedfaſt truth,
Nor make his promiſe vain.

Were my dependence on myſelf, I were undone: the firſt temptation would ſhake my reſolutions; I ſhould ſell the ineſtimable riches of thy love for a trifle, and fool away immortal pleaſures for the joys of a moment; a ſpecious deluſion would ſeduce me from all my hopes of a glorious futurity; I ſhall fall a victim to my

my own folly, and muſt inevitably periſh, if thou forſake me: but the ſtrength of *Iſrael* is my hope, the Mighty One of *Jacob* my defence.

Thou art the rock of ages; the fix'd and immutable Divinity is my high tower, and my refuge, my Redeemer, and almighty Saviour. Theſe were the bleſs'd, the glorious titles by which thou didſt at firſt aſſure my doubtful ſoul: theſe were the tranſporting names I knew and called thee by; and thou haſt anſwered them through all the changes of my life.

I was thy early care; thou didſt ſupport my helpleſs infancy, and art the watchful guide of my unſteady youth. Which way ſoever I turn, I meet thy mercy, and trace thy providence; and as long as I live, I will record thy benefits, and depend on thy truth; thoſe benefits which have conſtantly purſued me, and that truth which has never deceived me, and is engaged never to abandon me. Tranſporting aſſurance! What further ſecurity can I ask? What ſecurity can I wiſh beyond eternal veracity? *The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be remov'd, but thy kindneſs ſhall not depart, nor the*

covenant of thy peace be broken; that covenant which has been ſeal'd by the blood of the Son of God, and in the holy ſacrament I have receiv'd the pledges of thy love. Thou didſt graciouſly invite me into that communion, and meet me there with the moſt unmerited favour.

Fear not, ſayeſt thou, poor trembling ſoul, for I am thy Redeemer and thy mighty Saviour, the hope of *Iſrael*, and in my name ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſs'd: *I am gracious and merciful, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth:* theſe are the titles by which I have reveal'd myſelf to men; I came the expected *Meſſiah*, the ſtar of *Jacob*, and the glory of the *Gentiles*. I came from the fulneſs of ineffable glory, in the form of man, to redeem the race of *Adam*. I am willing and able to ſave, and *whoſoever comes to me, I will in no wiſe caſt away*. Fear not, I had kind deſigns towards thee from eternity; and by theſe viſible ſigns of my body and blood, I ſeal my love to thy ſoul: take here the pledges of heaven, the aſſurances of everlaſting happineſs.

'Tis enough, replied my tranſported ſoul; divide the world as thou wilt, let others

others unenvy'd ſhare its glory; thy love is all I crave. I am bleſs'd with that aſſurance, I am ſurrounded with the joys of paradiſe; every place is a heaven, while my Beloved is mine, and I am his.

If all the monarchs, whoſe command ſupreme.
Divides the wide dominion of this ball.
Should offer each his boaſted diadem,
I would not quit thy favour for them all:
Theſe triſles with contempt I would reſign;
The world's a toy, while I can call thee MINE.

Let God and angels witneſs for me, that I renounce the world, and chuſe thy love as my portion: Witneſs that I ſacrifice my darling ſins to thee, and from this moment ſolemnly devote myſelf to thy ſervice.

Thus did I engage myſelf to be the Lord's, and thus didſt thou graciouſly condeſcend to ſeal the privileges of the new covenant to my ſoul. And O let the ſolemn tranſaction never be forgotten; let it be writ in the volumes of eternity; let it be engraven in the books of unalterable deſtiny: there let the ſacred articles ſtand recorded, and be had in everlaſting remembrance.

XI. *Thou art my* GOD.

O God, thou art my God; thou art thy own bleſſedneſs, the centre of my own deſires, and the boundleſs ſpring of thy own happineſs. Thou art immutable and infinitely perfect, and therein conſiſts thy bleſſedneſs and glory: But that *thou art my God*, 'tis from thence flows all my conſolation: This glorious privilege is my dignity and boaſt, *Thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee; my father's God, and I will exalt thee; the Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my rock, and let the God of my ſalvation be exalted. Thy benignity is better than life, therefore my lips ſhall praiſe thee.*

I have all things in poſſeſſing thee; I find no want, no emptineſs within; my wiſhes are anſwer'd, and all my deſires appeas'd, when I believe my title to thy favour ſecure. Whatever tempeſts ariſe, whatever darkneſs ſurrounds me, yet *thou art my God*; I cry, and the ſtorms are appeas'd, and the darkneſs vaniſhes. I find my expectations from the world diſappointed, my friends falſe, and human dependence vain; but ſtill *thou art*

my

my God, my unfailing confidence, my rock, my everlaſting inheritance. Death and hell level their darts againſt me; but with a heavenly tranquillity I cry, *Thou art my God: I dwell on high, my place of defence is the munition of rocks.*

My hiding-place, my refuge, tower,
And ſhield, art thou, O Lord:
I firmly anchor all my hopes
On thy unerring word.

While thou art mine, what can I fear? Can Omnipotence be vanquiſh'd? can almighty ſtrength be oppos'd? When it can, then, and not till then, ſhall I want ſecurity; then, and not till then, ſhall my confidence be ſhaken, and my hopes confounded.

Thou art my God: Let me again repeat the glorious accents, and hear the pleaſurable ſounds. Let me a thouſand and a thouſand times repeat it; 'tis rapture all, and harmony: the harps of angels and their tongues, what notes more melodious could they ſing or play? What but theſe tranſporting words give the emphaſis to all their joys? On this they dwell, 'tis their eternal theme, *Thou art my God.* Like me every ſeraph boaſts the

glorious propriety, and owes his happineſs to thoſe important words: in them unbounded joys are comprehended, paradiſe itſelf, all heaven is here diſcrib'd; all that is poſſible to be utter'd of celeſtial bleſſedneſs is here contain'd.

My God, my all-ſufficient good,
My portion, and my choice;
In thee my vaſt deſires are fill'd,
And all my powers rejoice.

My God, my triumph, and my glory, let others boaſt of what they will, and pride themſelves in human ſecurities; let them place their confidence in their wealth, their honour and their numerous friends: I renounce all earthly dependence, and glory only in my God.

From him alone my joys ſhall riſe,
And run eternal rounds,
Beyond the limits of the ſkies
And all created bounds.

When death ſhall remove all other ſupports, and force me to quit my title to the deareſt names below, in *my God* I ſhall have an unchangeable propriety: that engagement ſhall remain firm when I ſhall loſe my hold of all other enjoyments; when all human things vaniſh with

with an everlaſting flight, I ſhall bid them a joyful adieu, and breathe out my ſoul with this triumphant exclamation, *Thou art my God*, my inheritance, my eternal poſſeſſion: nor death, nor hell, ſhall ever ſeparate me from thy love.

Thou art my God. Let me ſurvey the extent of my bleſſedneſs: let me take a proſpect of my vaſt poſſeſſion: let me conſider its dimenſions; O height! O depth! O length and breadth immenſurable! I have all that is worth poſſeſſing; *thou art my God.*

But, what have I uttered? Is mortality permitted to ſpeak theſe daring words? can the race of man make ſuch glorious pretenſions? Thou thyſelf canſt give no more: thou that art thy own happineſs, and the ſpring of joy to all thy creatures, with thee are the fountains of pleaſure, and in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy: immortal life and happineſs flow from thee, and they are neceſſarily bleſt who are ſurrounded with thy favour; thou art their God, and *thou art my God* to everlaſting ages.

Earth flies with all the charms it has in ſtore,
Its ſnares and gay temptations are no more;

Creatures

Creatures no more of entity can boaſt,
The ſtreams, the hills, and tow'ring groves are loſt.
The ſun, the ſtars, and the fair fields of light
Withdraw, and now are vaniſh'd from my ſight;
And God is all in all.

XII. *Confeſſion of ſin, with hope of pardon.*

BREAK, break, inſenſible heart! let confuſion cover me, and darkneſs, black as my own guilt, ſurround me. Lord, what a monſter am I become? How hateful to myſelf for offending thee? How much more deteſtable to thee, to thee againſt whom I have offended? Why have I provok'd the God on whom my being every moment depends? The God, who out of nothing advanced me to a reaſonable and immortal nature, and put me in a capacity of being happy for ever? The God whoſe goodneſs has run parallel with my life? who has preſerved me in a thouſand dangers, and kept me even from the ruin I courted, and even while I repin'd at the providence that ſaved me.

How often has he recovered me from eternal miſery, and brought me back from the very borders of hell, when there was but a dying groan, but one faint ſigh between

between me and everlaſting perdition? When all human help fail'd, and my mournful friends were taking their laſt farewels; when every ſmiling hope forſook me, and the horrors of death ſurrounded me, to God I cried from the depths of miſery and deſpair; I cried, and he was intreated, and reſcued my life from deſtruction: he *brought me out of the miry clay, and ſet my feet upon a rock.* A thouſand inſtances of thy goodneſs could I recount, and all to my own confuſion.

Could I conſider thee as my enemy, I might forgive myſelf; but when I conſider thee as my beſt friend, my tender father, the ſuſtainer of my life, and author of my happineſs, good God! what a monſtrous thing do I appear, who have ſinned againſt thee? Could I charge thee with ſeverity, or call thy laws rigorous and unjuſt, I had ſome excuſe; but I am ſilenced there by the conviction of my own reaſon, which aſſents to all thy precepts as juſt and holy. But to heighten my guilt, I have violated the ſacred rules I approve: I have provok'd the juſtice I fear, and offended the purity I adore.

Yet

Yet ſtill there are higher aggravations of my iniquity; and what gives me the utmoſt confuſion is, that I have ſinned againſt unbounded love and goodneſs: horrid ingratitude! here lies the emphaſis of my folly and miſery; the ſenſe of this torments me, can I not ſay, as much as the dread of hell, or the fears of loſing heaven: Thy love and tender compaſſion, the late pleaſing ſubjects of my thoughts, are on this account become my terror. The titles of an enemy and a judge ſcarce found more painful to my ears, than thoſe of a friend and a benefactor, which ſo ſhamefully inhance my guilt: thoſe ſacred names confound and terrify my ſoul, becauſe they furniſh my conſcience with the moſt exquiſite reproaches: the thoughts of ſuch goodneſs abuſed, and ſuch clemency affronted, ſeem'd to me almoſt as inſupportable, as thoſe of thy wrath and ſeverity.

O whither ſhall I turn? I dare not look upward; the ſun and ſtars upbraid me there; if I look downward, the fields and fountains take their Creator's part, and heaven and earth conſpire to aggravate my ſins: thoſe common bleſſings tell me how much I am indebted to thy bounty:

bounty: but, Lord, when I recal thy particular favours, I am utterly confounded: what numerous inſtances could I recount? nor has my rebellion yet ſhut up the fountain of thy grace; for yet I breathe, and yet I live, and live to implore a pardon: heaven is ſtill open, and the throne of God acceſſible. But oh! with what confidence can I approach it? what motives can I urge, but ſuch as carry my own condemnation in them.

Shall I urge thy former pity and indulgence? This were to plead againſt myſelf: and yet thy clemency, that clemency which I have abus'd, is the beſt argument I can bring; thy grace and clemency as revealed in Jeſus, the Son of thy love, the bleſſed Reconciler of God and man.

O whither has my folly reduced me? With what words ſhall I chuſe to addreſs thee? *Pardon my iniquity, O Lord, for it is great:* ſurpriſing argument! yet this will magnify thy goodneſs, and yield me an eternal theme to praiſe thee: 'twill add an emphaſis to all my grateful ſongs, and tune my harp to everlaſting harmony. The ranſom'd of the Lord ſhall join with me, while this glorious inſtance of thy

thy grace excites their wonder, and my unbounded gratitude: thus ſhall thy glory be exalted.

O Lord God, permit a poor worthleſs creature to plead a little with thee. What honour will my deſtruction bring thee? What profit, what triumph to the Almighty will my perdition be? Mercy is thy brighteſt attribute; this gives thee all thy lovelineſs, and completes thy beauty. By names of kindneſs and indulgence thou haſt choſen to reveal thyſelf to men: by titles of the moſt tender import, thou haſt made thyſelf known to my ſoul; titles which thou doſt not yet diſdain, but are ſtill compaſſionate and ready to pardon.

But that thou haſt or wilt forgive me, O my God, aggravates my guilt. And wilt thou indeed forgive me? Wilt thou remit the gloomy ſcore, and reſtore the privilege I have forfeited? Wondrous love! aſtoniſhing benignity! let me never live to repeat my ingratitude; let me never live to break my penitent vows; let me die e'er that unhappy moment arrive.

XIII. *The*

XIII. *The abſence of* GOD *on earth.*

WHAT is hell, what is damnation, but an excluſion from thy preence? 'Tis the want of that which gives the regions of darkneſs all their horror. What is heaven, what are the ſatisfactions of angels, but the views of thy glory? what but thy ſmiles and complaiſance are the ſprings of their immortal tranſports?

Without the light of thy countenance, what privilege is my being? What canſt thou thyſelf give me to contervail the infinite loſs? Could the riches, the empty glories, and inſipid pleaſures of the world, recompenſe me for it? Ah! no. Not all the variety of the creation could ſatisfy while I am deprived of thee: let the ambitious, the licentious, and covetous, ſhare theſe trifles among themſelves; they are no amuſements for my dejected thoughts.

There was a time (but ah! that happy time is paſſed, thoſe bliſsful minutes gone) when with a modeſt aſſurance I could call thee *my father, my almighty friend, my defence, my hope, and my ex-*

ceeding great reward: but thoſe glorious advantages are loſt, thoſe raviſhing proſpects withdrawn, and to my trembling ſoul thou doſt no more appear but as a conſuming fire, an inacceſſible majeſty, my ſevere judge, and my omnipotent adverſary; and who ſhall deliver me out of thy hands? Where ſhall I find a ſhelter from thy wrath? What ſhades can cover me from thy all-ſeeing eye?

One glance from thee, one piercing ray,
Would kindle darkneſs into day:
The veil of night is no diſguiſe,
No ſcreen from thy all-ſearching eyes:
Thro' midnight-ſhades thou find'ſt thy way,
As in the blazing noon of day.

But will the Lord caſt off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Has God indeed forgotten to be gracious? Will he ſhut out my prayer for ever, and muſt I never behold my Maker? Muſt I never meet thoſe ſmiles that fill the heavenly inhabitants with unutterable joys? Thoſe ſmiles which enlighten the celeſtial region, and make everlaſting day above? In vain then have theſe wretched eyes beheld the light, in vain am I endued with reaſonable faculties and immortal principles: alas! what will they prove but

but everlaſting curſes, if I muſt never ſee the face of God?

Is it a dream? or do I hear
The voice that ſo delights my ear?
Lo, he o'er hills his ſteps extends,
And bounding from the cliffs deſcends:
Now like a roe outſtrips the wind,
And leaves the panting hart behind.

I have waited for thee as they that wait for the morning, and thy returns are more welcome than the ſpringing day-light after the horrors of a melancholy night; more welcome than eaſe to the ſick, than water to the thirſty, or reſt to the weary traveller. How undone was I without thee? In vain, while thou wert abſent, the world hath try'd to entertain me: all it could offer was like jeſts to dying men, or like recreation to the damn'd. On thy favour alone my tranquillity depends; deprived of that, I ſhould ſigh for happineſs in the midſt of a paradiſe: *thy loving-kindneſs is better than life*; and if a taſte of thy love be thus tranſporting, what extaſies ſhall I know when I drink my fill of the ſtreams of bliſs that flow from thy right-hand for ever? But when——

When ſhall this happy day of viſion be?
When ſhall I make a near approach to thee?
Be loſt in love and wrapt in extaſy?
Oh! when ſhall I behold thee all ſerene,
Without this envious cloudy veil between?
'Tis true; the ſacred elements * impart
Thy virtual preſence to my faithful heart,
But to my ſenſe ſtill unreveal'd thou art.
This, tho' a great, is an imperfect bliſs,
To ſee a ſhadow for the God I wiſh:
My ſoul a more exalted pitch would fly,
And view thee in the heights of majeſty.

XIV. *Baniſhment from* GOD *for ever.*

DEpart from me, ye curſed: Oh! let me never hear thy voice pronounce thoſe dreadful words. With what terrors would that ſentence pierce my heart, while it thunders in my ears! Oh! rather ſpeak me into my primitive nothing, and with one potent word finiſh my exiſtence. To be ſeparated from thee, and curſt with immortality, who can ſuſtain the intolerable doom?

O dreadful ſtate of black deſpair,
To ſee my God remove,
And fix my doleful ſtation where
I muſt not taſte his love,

nor view the light of thy countenance for

* The Lord's Supper.

for ever. Unutterable wo! there is no hell beyond it. Separation from God is the depth of miſery. Blackneſs of darkneſs, and eternal night muſt neceſſarily involve a ſoul excluded from thy preſence. What life, what joy, what hope is to be found where thou art not? I want words to paint my thoughts of that diſmal ſtate. Oh! let me never be reſerv'd for the dreadful experience! Rather let looſe thy wrath, and in a moment reduce me into nothing.

Depart from thee! Oh! whether ſhould I go from thee? *Into utter darkneſs?* That makes no addition at all to the wretch's miſery that's baniſh'd from thy face. After that fearful doom, I ſhould without conſtrain ſeek out ſhades as dark as hell, being moſt agreeable to my own deſpair, and in the horrors of eternal night bewail the infinite loſs.

The remembrance of that loſt happineſs would render celeſtial day inſufferable. The light of paradiſe could not cheer me without thy favour: the ſongs of angels would but heighten my anguiſh, and torment me with a ſcene of bleſs which I muſt never taſte. The ſight of thy favourites, and the glories of thy

court, would but excite my envy, and fill me with madneſs, while I conſider'd myſelf the object of thine eternal indignation: nor could all the harmony of heaven allay the horror of that reflection.

The groans of the damn'd, and the darkneſs of the infernal caverns, would better ſuit my grief. There to the cries of tormented ghoſts, and to the ſound of eternal tempeſts, I might join my wild complaints, and lament the loſs of infinite bliſs, and curſe my own folly: but all the plagues below, if I might ſpeak my preſent thoughts, ſhould not extort a blaſphemous reflection on the divine attributes; for I know I deſerve eternal miſery, and even in hell I think I ſhould confeſs thy juſtice. Thy long-experienced clemency, I am ſure, ought to ſilence my reproaches for ever, and to all eternity leave thee unblemiſh'd with the imputation of cruelty.

But oh! what agonies would the remembrance of thy former favour excite? What exquiſite remorſe would it give me to recal thoſe happy moments when thou didſt bleſs my retir'd devotions with thy preſence? After I have reliſh'd thoſe divine entertainments, how bitter

would the dregs of thy wrath be? Whether wou'd thy frowns ſink me, after I have enjoy'd the light of thy countenance?

If I muſt loſe thy *favour*, oh! let me forget what that word imports, and blot for ever from my remembrance the joys that a ſenſe of thy love has excited: let no traces of thoſe ſacred tranſports be left on my ſoul.

But muſt I depart from thee into everlaſting fire? Double and dreadful curſe! and yet unquenchable flames, and infernal chains (if I can judge in this life of ſuch awful futurities) would be leſs terrible than the ſenſe of thoſe loſt joys. That loſs would endure no reflection; the review would be for ever inſufferable; the ages of eternity could not diminiſh the exquiſite regret; ſtill it would excite new and unutterable anguiſh, and rack me with infinite deſpair.

Bleſſed *God*, pity the ſoul whoſe extremeſt horror is the doom of an eternal departure from thee. Draw my ſpirit into the holieſt and the neareſt union with thyſelf that is poſſible, while it dwells in this fleſh, and let me here commence that delightful reſidence, and converſe

verſe with God, which nor death, nor judgment ſhall ever deſtroy, nor ſhall a long eternity ever put a period to it.

XV. *The glory of* GOD *in his works of creation, providence, and redemption.*

MY being immediately flows from thee, and ſhould I not praiſe my omnipotent Maker? I receiv'd the laſt breath I drew from thee, thou doſt ſuſtain my life this very moment, and the next depends entirely on thy pleaſure. 'Tis the dignity of my nature to know, and my happineſs to praiſe and adore my great original. But oh! thou ſupreme of all things, how art thou to be extoll'd by mortal man? *I ſay to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worms, ye are my brethren; my days are as a hand's breadth, and my life is nothing before thee; but thou art the ſame, and thy years never fail: from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God*, the incomprehenſible, the immutable divinity. The language of paradiſe, and the ſtrains of celeſtial eloquence, fall ſhort of thy perfections; the firſt-born ſons of light loſe themſelves in bliſsful aſtoniſhment in ſearch of thy excellencies;

excellencies; even they, with ſilent exſtaſy, adore thee, while thou art veil'd with ineffable ſplendor.

> The bright, the bleſs'd divinity is known
> And comprehended by himſelf alone.

Who can conceive the extent of that Power, which, out of nothing, brought materials for a riſing world, and from a gloomy chaos bid the harmonious univerſe appear?

> Confuſion heard the voice, and wild uproar
> Stood rul'd; ſtood vaſt infinity confin'd.

At thy word, the pillars of the sky were fram'd, and its beauteous arches rais'd: thy breath kindled the ſtars, adorn'd the moon with ſilver rays, and gave the ſun its flaming ſplendor. Thou didſt prepare for the waters their capacious bed, and, by thy power, ſet bounds to the raging billows: by thee the vallies were clothed in their flowery pride, and the mountains crown'd with groves. In all the wonderful effects of nature, we adore and confeſs thy power; thou uttereſt thy voice in thunder, and doſt ſcatter thy lightnings abroad; thou rideſt on the wings of the wind, the

mountains

mountains ſmoke, and the foreſts tremble at thy approach; the ſummer and winter, the ſhady night, and the bright revolutions of the day, are thine.

> Theſe are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
> Almighty; thine this univerſal frame:
> Thus wondrous they; thyſelf how wondrous then?

But O! what muſt thy eſſential majeſty and beauty be, if thou art thus illuſtrious in thy works? If the diſcoveries of thy power and wiſdom are thus delightful, how tranſporting are the manifeſtations of thy goodneſs? From thee every thing that lives receives its breath; and by thee are all upheld in life. Thy providence reacheſt the leaſt inſect, for thou art good, and thy care extends to all thy works. Thou feedeſt the ravens, and doſt provide the young lions their prey: thou ſcattereſt thy bleſſings with a liberal hand on the whole creation; man, ungrateful man, largely partakes thy bounty. Thou cauſeſt thy rain to deſcend, and makeſt thy ſun to ſhine on the evil and unthankful; *for thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever.*

As the Creator and Preſerver of men, thou art glorioufly manifeſt; but oh! how

how much more gloriouſly art thou revealed, as reconciling ungrateful enemies to thyſelf by the blood of thy eternal Son? Here thy beneficence diſplays its brighteſt ſplendor: here thou doſt fully diſcover thy moſt magnificent titles, THE LORD, THE LORD GOD, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONG-SUFFERING, AND ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS: *How unſearchable are thy ways, and thy paths paſt finding out!* Infinite depths of love, never to be expreſs'd by human language; and yet ſhould man be ſilent, the ſtones themſelves would ſpeak, and the mute creation find a voice to upbraid his ungrateful folly.

XVI. *Longing for the coming of* CHRIST.

COME, LORD JESUS, quickly; oh come, leſt my expectations faint, leſt I grow weary, and murmur at thy long delay. I am tired with theſe vanities, and the world grows every day more unentertaining and inſipid; it has now loſt its charms, and finds my heart inſenſible to all its allurements. With coldneſs and contempt I view theſe tranſitory glories, inſpired with nobler proſpects and

and vaſter expectation by faith. I ſee the promis'd land, and every day brings me nearer the poſſeſſion of my heavenly inheritance. Then ſhall I ſee God and live, and face to face behold my triumphant Redeemer,

And in his favour find immortal light.
Ye hours and days, cut ſhort your tedious flight;
Ye months and years (if ſuch allotted be
In this deteſted barren world for me)
With haſty revolution roll along,
I languiſh with impatience to be gone.

I have nothing here to linger for; my hopes, my reſt, my treaſure, and my joys are all above: my ſoul faints for the courts of the Lord in a dry and thirſty land, where there is no refreſhment. How long *ſhall I dwell in* Meſheck, *and ſojourn in the tents of* Kedar? When will the wearifome journey of life be finiſh'd? When ſhall I reach my everlaſting home, and arrive at my celeſtial country? My heart, my wiſhes are already there: I have no engagements to delay my farewel, nothing to detain me here; but wander an unacquainted pilgrim, a ſtranger and deſolate, far from my native regions.

My

My friends are gone before, and are now triumphing in the ſkies, ſecure of the conqueſt, poſſeſſed of the rewards of victory. They ſurvey the field of battle, and look back, with pleaſure, on the diſtant danger: death and hell for ever vanquiſh'd, leave them in the poſſeſſion of endleſs tranquillity and joy; while I, beſet with a thouſand ſnares, and tired with continual toil, unſteadily maintain the field, till active faith ſteps in, aſſures me of the conqueſt, and ſhews me the immortal crown. 'Tis faith tells me that *light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart:* it aſſures me, that *my Redeemer lives, and that he ſhall ſtand the laſt day on the earth; and though after my ſkin-worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and not another; and theſe eyes ſhall behold, though my reins be conſumed within me.* Amen, even ſo come Lord *Jeſus.* This muſt be the language of my ſoul till thou doſt appear, and theſe my impatient breathings after thee. 'Till I ſee thy ſalvation, my heart and my fleſh will pine for the living God.

Grant me, O LORD, *to fulfil as a hireling my day*; ſhorten the ſpace, and let it be full of action. 'Tis of ſmall importance how few there are of theſe little circles of days and hours, ſo they are but well filled up with devotion, and with all proper duty.

XVII. *Seeking after an abſent* GOD.

OH! let not the Lord be angry, and I who am but duſt will ſpeak: Why doſt thou withdraw thyſelf, and ſuffer me to purſue thee in vain? If I am ſurrounded with thy immenſity, why am I thus inſenſible of thee? Why do I not find thee if thou art every where preſent? I ſearch thee in the temple, where thou haſt often met me; there I have ſeen the traces of thy majeſty and beauty; but thoſe ſacred viſions bleſs my ſight no more. I ſearch thee in my ſecret retirements, where I have called upon thy name, and have often heard the whiſpers of thy voice; that celeſtial converſation hath often reach'd and raptur'd my ſoul, but I am ſolaced no more with thoſe divine condeſcenſions; I liſten, but I hear thoſe gentle ſounds no more; I pine and languiſh, but thou flieſt me; ſtill

I wither in thy abſence, as a drooping plant for the reviving ſun.

O when wilt thou ſcatter this melancholy darkneſs? When ſhall the ſhadows fly before thee? When ſhall the cheerful glory of thy grace dawn upon my mind at thy approach? I ſhall revive at thy light; my vital ſpirits will confeſs thy preſence; grief and anxiety will vaniſh before thee, and immortal joys ſurround my ſoul.

Where thou art preſent, heaven and happineſs enſue; hell and damnation fills the breaſt where thou art abſent. While God withdraws, I am encompaſſed with darkneſs and deſpair; the ſun and ſtars ſhine with an uncomfortable luſtre; the faces of my friends grow tireſome; the ſmiles of angels would fail to cheer my languiſhing ſpirit. I grow unacquainted with tranquillity; peace and joy are empty ſounds to me, and words without a meaning.

Tell me not of glory and pleaſure, there are no ſuch things without my God; while he withdraws, what delight can theſe trifles afford? All that amuſes mankind, are but dreams of happineſs, ſhades and fantaſtic appearances: what com-

penſation can they make for an infinite good departed? All nature cannot repair my loſs: heaven and earth would offer their treaſures in vain; not all the kingdoms of this world, nor the thrones of archangels, could give me a recompenſe for an abſent God.

O where can my grief find redreſs? Whence can I draw ſatisfaction when the fountain of joy ſeals up its ſtreams? My ſorrows are hopeleſs till he return; without him my night will never ſee a dawn, but extend to everlaſting darkneſs: content and joy will be eternal ſtrangers to my breaſt. Had I all things within the compaſs of creation to delight me, his frowns would blaſt the whole enjoyment: unreconcil'd to God, my ſoul would be for ever at variance with itſelf.

Even now, while I believe thy glory hid from me but with a tranſient eclipſe, while I wait for thy return as for the dawning day, my ſoul ſuffers inexpreſſible agonies at the delay; the minutes ſeem to linger, and days are lengthen'd into ages: but, Lord, what keener anguiſh ſhould I feel, did I think thy preſence had totally forſaken me; did I imagine thy glory ſhould no more ariſe

on

on my ſoul? My ſpirits fail at the ſuppoſition; I cannot face the dreadful apprehenſions of my God for ever gone. Is it not hell in its moſt horrid proſpect, eternal darkneſs, and the undying worm, infinite ruin, and irreparable damage? Compared to this, what were all the plagues that earth could threaten, or hell invent? What's diſgrace, and poverty, and pain? What's all that mortals fear, real or imaginary evils? they are nothing compared to the terrors which the thought of loſing my God excites..

O thou, who art my boundleſs treaſure, my infinite delight, my all, my ineffable portion, can I part with thee? I may ſee without light, and breathe without air, ſooner than be bleſs'd without my God. Happineſs ſeparate from thee were a contradiction, an impoſſibility (if I dare ſpeak it) to omnipotence itſelf. I feel a flame, which the moſt glorious creation could not ſatisfy; an emptineſs which nothing but infinite love could fill. I muſt find thee, or weary myſelf in an eternal purſuit. Nothing ſhall divert me in the endleſs ſearch; no obſtacle ſhall fright me back, no allurement with-hold me, nothing ſhall flatter or relieve my

impatience; my bliſs, my heaven, my all depends on the ſucceſs. Shew me thou art, O my God; conduct me to thy preſence, and let thy love confine me there for ever.

VIII. *Appeals to* GOD *concerning the ſupremacy of love to him.*

O GOD, when I ceaſe to love and praiſe thee, let me ceaſe to breathe and live; when I forget thee, let me forget the name of happineſs, and let every pleaſing idea be razed from my memory. When thou art not my ſupreme delight, let all things elſe deceive me; let me grow unacquainted with peace, and ſeek repoſe in vain: let deluſions mock my gayeſt hopes, let my deſires find no ſatisfaction, till they are terminated all in thee. When I forget the ſatisfactions of thy love, O my God, let pleaſure be a ſtranger to my ſoul; when I prefer not that to my chiefeſt joy, let me be inſenſible of all delight; when thy benignity is not dearer to me than life, let that become my burden and my pain.

Search the inmoſt receſſes of my heart, and if thou findeſt any competitor there,

there, remove the darling vanity, and blot every name but thine from my breaſt. Let me find nothing but emptiin the creature, when I forſake the all-ſufficient Creator; let the ſtreams be cut off when I wander away, and abandon the fountain. Let me be deſtitute of aſſiſtance when I ceaſe to rely on thee: let my lips be ever ſilent, when they refuſe to acknowledge thy benefits, and make not thee the ſubject of their higheſt praiſe. Let no joyful ſtrain enter at my ears, when thy name is not the moſt delightful ſound they can convey to my heart.

I have been pronouncing heavy curſes on myſelf, if thy love be not my chief bleſſing; yet, O my deareſt good, my portion, and my only felicity, might I not go on farther ſtill, and even venture immortal joys on the ſincerity of my love to thee? Bleſſed Lord, forgive theſe dangerous efforts of a mortal tongue, which are the mere outbreakings of a fervent affection. I could even dare to pledge all my hopes and my pretenſions to future happineſs, (and O let not my heart deceive me) I think I could riſk them all, if thou thyſelf art not the ob-

ject

ject of my brighteſt hopes, and the light of thy countenance the height of that expected happineſs.

If I deſire any thing in heaven or on earth in compariſon of thee, I am almoſt ready to ſay, baniſh me as an eternal exile from the light of paradiſe: even that paradiſe would be melancholy darkneſs without thee, and the obſcureſt corner of the creation, bleſs'd with thy preſence, would be more agreeable. Oh! where could I be happy remote from thee? What imaginable good could ſupply thy abſence? Say, O my God, do I not love thee?

Shall I call the holy angels to witneſs? Shall I call heaven and earth to witneſs? Will not the moſt high God himſelf, the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, condeſcend to witneſs the ardour and ſincerity of my love?

With what pleaſure do I reflect on the obligations by which I have devoted myſelf to thee? My ſoul collects itſelf, and with an entire aſſent gives up all its pōwers to thee: I would bind myſelf nnto thee beyond all the ties that mortals know. You miniſters of light, give me your flames, and teach me your celeſtial

leſtialform; lend all the noble and pathetic, and ſolemn as your own immortal vows, and I will joyfully go thro' them all to bind myſelf to my God for ever. Say, now, ye heavens and earth, ſay, ye holy angels, and O thou all-knowing God, ſay, do I not love thee?

XIX. *A devout rapture, or love to* GOD *inexpreſſible.*

THOU radiant ſun, thou moon, and all ye ſparkling ſtars, how gladly would I leave your pleaſant light to ſee the face of God? Ye cryſtal ſtreams, ye groves and flowery lawns, my innocent delights, how joyfully could I leave you to meet that bliſsful proſpect? And you delightful faces of my friends, I would this moment quit you all to ſee him whom my ſoul loves; ſo loves, that I can find no words to expreſs the unutterable ardour: not as the miſer loves his wealth, nor the ambitious his grandeur; not as the libertine loves his pleaſures, or the generous man his friend: theſe are flat ſimilitudes to deſcribe ſuch an intenſe paſſion as mine. Not as a man ſcorch'd in a fever, longs for a cooling draught; not

not as a weary traveller wiſhes for ſoft repoſe; my reſtleſs deſires admit of no equal compariſon from theſe.

I love my friend; my vital breath, and the light of heaven are dear to me: but ſhould I ſay, I love my God as I love theſe, I ſhould belie the ſacred flame which aſpires to infinity. 'Tis thee, abſtractly thee, O uncreated beauty, that I love; in thee, my wiſhes are all terminated; in thee, as in their bliſsful centre, all my deſires meet, and there they muſt be eternally fixed: 'Tis thou alone that muſt conſtitute my everlaſting happineſs. Were the harps of angels ſilent, there would be harmony for me in the whiſpers of thy love: were the fields of light darken'd, thy ſmiles would bleſs me with everlaſting day; the viſion of thy face will attract my eyes, nor give me leiſure to waſte a look on other objects to all eternity, any further than God is to be ſeen in his creatures. All their beams of grace, and joy, and glory, are derived from thee, the eternal ſun, and will merit my attention no farther than they reflect thy image, or diſcover thy excellencies.

Even

Even at this diſtance, encompaſs'd with the ſhades of death, and the miſts of darkneſs, in theſe cold melancholy regions, when a ray of thy love breaks in on my ſoul, when thro' the clouds I can trace but one feeble beam, even that obſcures all human glory, and gives me a contempt for whatever mortality can boaſt. What wonders then will the open viſion of thy face effect, when I ſhall enjoy it in ſo ſublime a degree, that the magnificence of the skies will not draw my regard, nor the converſe of angels divert my thoughts from thee? Thou wilt engroſs my everlaſting attention, and I ſhould abound in felicity, if I had nothing to entertain me but immediate communion with the infinite divinity.

Mend thy pace, old lazy time, and ſhake thy heavy ſands; make ſhorter circles, ye rolling planets; when will your deſtined courſes be fulfill'd? Thou reſtleſs ſun, how long wilt thou travel the celeſtial road? When will thy ſtarry walk be finiſh'd? When will the commiſſion'd angel arreſt thee in thy progreſs, and lifting up his hand, ſwear by the unutterable name, *that time ſhall be no more?*

O happy period! my impatient ſoul ſprings forward to ſalute thee, and leaves the lagging days, and months, and years far behind. *Make haſte, my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart on the ſpicy mountains.*

I pine, I die for the ſight of thy countenance; oh! turn the vail aſide, blow away the ſeparating cloud; pull out the pins of this tabernacle, break the cords, and let fall the curtain of mortality. Oh! let it interpoſe no longer between me and my perfect bliſs. I feel thoſe flames of divine love, which are unextinguiſhable as the lights of heaven, not death itſelf ſhall quench the ſacred ardour.

Ye miniſters of light, ye guardians of the juſt, ſtand and witneſs to my vows; and in a humble dependence on thy grace, O *Jeſus*, may I not venture to bid theſe thy flaming miniſters proteſt againſt me, when I change my love, and ſtand my accuſers at the laſt judgment? When I prove falſe to thee, may I not venture to ſay to them all, Bring in your awful evidence, and proclaim my perjury.

For you have liſten'd, while the ſacred name,
That kindles in each heavenly breaſt a flame,

You liſten'd while it melted on my tongue,
Flow'd from my lips, and grac'd the midnight-ſong.
Bleſs'd was the time, and ſwiftly fled the hours
While holy love employ'd my nobleſt powers:
The heavens appear'd, and the propitious skies
Unveil'd their inmoſt glories to my eyes.
Oh! ſtay, I cry'd, ye happy moments ſtay,
Nor in your flight ſnatch theſe delights away:
I ask no more the riſing ſun to view,
To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu.

Theſe heavens and this earth have been witneſſes to my vows: the holy angels have been witneſſes, and all will join together to condemn me when I violate my faith. Strengthen and confirm it, O my Saviour, and make the bonds of it immortal.

If I were only to reaſon upon this ſubject, I might ſay, what motive could earth, what could hell, what could heaven itſelf propoſe to tempt my ſoul to change its love? What could they lay in the balance againſt an infinite good? What could be thrown in as a ſtake againſt the favour of God? Aſk the happy ſouls who know what the light of his countenance imports, who drink in joy and immortality from his ſmiles, aſk them what value they ſet on their enjoyments; aſk them what in heaven or earth ſhould purchaſe one moment's interval

of their bliſs; aſk ſome radiant ſeraph, amidſt the fervency of his raptures, at what price he values his happineſs: and when theſe have named the purchaſe, earth and hell may try to balance mine. Let them ſpread the baits that tempt deluded men to ruin; let riches, honour, beauty, and bewitching pleaſure appear in all their charms, the ſenſuality of the preſent and paſt ages, the *Perſian* delicacy, and the *Roman* pride; let them uncover the golden mines, and diſcloſe the ruby ſparkling in its bed; let them open the veins of ſapphire, and ſhew the diamond glittering in its rock; let them all be thrown into the balance; alas! their weight is too little and too light.—Let the pageantries of ſtate be added, imperial titles, and the enſigns of majeſty; put in all that boundleſs vanity imagines, or wild ambition craves, crowns and ſceptres, regal veſtments, and golden thrones, —the ſcale ſtill mounts.—Throw in the world entire—'tis unſubſtantial, and light as airy vanity.

Are theſe thy higheſt boaſts, O deluding world?—Ye miniſters of darkneſs, have you nothing elſe to offer? Are theſe your utmoſt propoſals? Are theſe a compenſation

penſation for the FAVOUR OF GOD? Alas! that boundleſs word has a meaning which out-weighs them all: infinite delight, unconceivable joy are expreſs'd in it; the light of his countenance ſignifies more than angels can deſcribe, or mortality imagine? and ſhall I quit all that an everlaſting heaven means, for empty ſhadows?"

Go ye baffled tempters, go offer your toys to madmen and fools; they all vaniſh under my ſcorn, and cannot yield ſo much as an amuſement to my aſpiring thoughts. The ſun in all his ſpacious circuit, beholds nothing to tempt my wiſhes. Theſe winding ſkies, in all their ample round, contain nothing equal to my deſires; my ambition has far different ends, and other proſpects in view; nothing below the joys of angels can ſatisfy me.

Let me explore the worlds of life and beauty, and find a path to the dazzling receſſes of the Moſt High: let me drink at the fountain-head of pleaſure, and derive all that I want from original and uncreated fulneſs and felicity.

Oh divine love! let me launch out into thy pleaſurable depths, and be ſwallowed

up of thee: let me plunge at once in immortal joy, and loſe myſelf in the infinite ocean of happineſs.

Till then I pine for my celeſtial country; till then I murmur to the winds and ſtreams, and tell the ſolitary ſhades my grief. The groves are conſcious to my complaints, and the moon and ſtars liſten to my ſighs; by their ſilent lights I talk over my heavenly concerns, and give a vent to my divine affections in mortal language; then looking upward, I grow impatient to reach the milky way, the ſeats of joy and immortality.

Come love, come life, and that bleſs'd day
For which I languiſh, come away;
When this dry ſoul, theſe eyes ſhall ſee,
And drink the unſeal'd ſource of thee.

Oh come, I cry, thou whom my ſoul loveth: I would go on, but want expreſſion, and vainly ſtruggle with the unutterable thought.

Tell me, you ſons of light, who feel the force of theſe celeſtial fires, in what language you paint their ſacred violence? Or do the tongues of ſeraphs faulter? Does the language of paradiſe want emphaſis here, and immortal eloquence fail?

Surely

Surely your happineſs is more perfect than all your deſcriptions of it: heaven echos to your charming notes as far as they reach, while divine love, which is all your ſong, is infinite, and knows no limits of decree or duration.

Yet I would ſay, ſome gentle ſpirit, come and inſtruct me in your art, lend me a golden harp, and guide the ſacred flight; let me imitate your devout ſtrains, let me copy out your harmony, and then,

Some of the faireſt quire above,
Shall flock around my ſong,
With joy to hear the name they love
Sound from a mortal tongue.

Bleſſed and immortal creatures, I long to join with you in your celeſtial ſtyle of adoration and love, I long to learn your exſtaſies of worſhip and joy in a language which mortals cannot pronounce, and to ſpeak the divine paſſion of my ſoul, in words which are now unſpeakable.

XX. *Self-reproof for inactivity.*

IS it poſſible that I ſhould one day be rapt almoſt into the third heavens,

and ere a few weeks have paſſed over me, I ſhould find myſelf creeping among the inſects of the earth, and almoſt as meanly buſied as they? Can divine love, which exalted me lately into flaming tranſports, ſo far ſubſide and grow cool within me? Can it leave me ſo unactive as I now feel myſelf? What ſhall I do to ſhame my conſcience with reproaches, and renew my flame to religious zeal and vigour.

Alas! how does the activity of men, about the little affairs of human life, condemn my negligence in matters of everlaſting conſequence? Does the fond lover, with ſuch anxiety and impatience, purſue the object of his wiſhes, and ſhall not divine beauty and infinite lovelineſs inflame my deſires to a nobler height, and excite my languiſhing devotion?

Are the ambitious ſo reſtleſs and ſolicitous to make themſelves great, and to purchaſe the veneration of fools? Do they lay ſuch mighty projects, and compaſs their deſigns with ſuch pains and difficulty, for mere pageantry and gaudy trifles; and ſhall I, who am a candidate for heaven, a probationer for celeſtial dignity, loſe

loſe my title for want of diligence? Shall I faint in the noble ſtrife, when God and angels are ready to aſſiſt me, and every moment's toil will be recompens'd with eternal ages of reſt and triumph?

See, ſee, the moments fly, the labour ſhortens, and the immenſe reward draws near; the palm of victory, the ſtarry crown are in view; the happy realms and fields of light entertain me with their glorious proſpect. Rouſe thee, my ſoul, to the moſt active purſuit of theſe felicities: waken all thy ſprightly powers, and let it never, never be thy reproach, that the vigour and intenſeneſs of thy labours fall ſhort of the pretenſions of thy deſire; or that thy holy induſtry ſhould ſink ſo far below the fervour of thoſe affections, which, in a devout hour, thou haſt pronounced *inexpreſſible*.

O Lord, what a mutable thing is man? what frailty works in his fleſh and blood, and hangs heavy upon our better powers? 'Tis grace, divine grace alone, can keep alive that immortal ſpark within us, which came firſt from heaven, and firſt taught our hearts to ariſe and ſpring upward. Preſerve and complete thy own work, Almighty Grace.

XXI. *A joyful view of approaching death.*

O Death, where is thy ſting; where is thy boaſted victory; the conqueſt is mine; I ſhall paſs in triumph through thy dark dominions, and through the grace of the Son of God, my divine leader; I ſhall appear there not a captive but a conqueror.

O King of terrors, where are thy formidable looks? I can ſee nothing dreadful in thy aſpect: thou appeareſt with no tokens of defiance, nor doſt thou come with ſummons from a ſevere judge; but with gentle invitations from my bleſſed Redeemer, who has paſs'd glorioufly through thy territories, in his way to his throne.

Thrice welcome, thou kind meſſenger of my liberty and happineſs! a thouſand times more welcome than jubilee to the wretched ſlave, than pardon to a condemn'd malefactor: I am going from darkneſs and confinement to immenſe light and perfect liberty; from theſe tempeſtuous regions to the ſoft and peaceful climes above; from pain and grief to everlaſting eaſe and tranquility.

For

For the toils of virtue, I ſhall immediately receive its vaſt rewards; for the reproach of fools, the honour and applauſe of angels. In a few minutes I ſhall be higher than yonder ſtars, and brighter far than they. I ſhall range the boundleſs æther, and breath the balmy air of paradiſe. I ſhall preſently behold my glorious Maker, and ſing hallelujahs to my exalted Saviour.

And now come, ye bright guardians of the juſt, conduct me through the unknown and trackleſs æther, for you paſs and repaſs this celeſtial road continually; you have commiſſion not to leave me till I arrive at *Mount Sion*, the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, the city of the living God; till I come to the inumerable company of angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.

Hold out, faith and patience; 'tis but a little while and your work will be at an end; but a few moments, and theſe ſighs and groans ſhall be converted into everlaſting hallelujahs; but a few weary ſteps, and the journey of life will be finiſhed. One effort more, and I ſhall have gained the top of the everlaſting hills, and from yonder bright ſummit

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ſhall preſently look back on the dangers I have eſcaped in my travels through the wilderneſs.

Roll faſter on, ye lingering minutes; the nearer my joys, the more impatient I am to ſeize them: after theſe painful agonies how greedily ſhall I drink in immortal eaſe and pleaſure? Break away, ye thick clouds, begone ye envious ſhades, and let me behold the glories ye conceal: let me ſee the promis'd land, and ſurvey the happy regions, I am immediately to poſſeſs. How long will you interpoſe between me and my bright Sun? between me and the unclouded face of God? Look up, my ſoul, ſee how ſweetly thoſe reviving beams break forth! how they diſpel the gloom, and gild the ſhades of death.

O bleſt eternity! with what a cheerful ſplendor doſt thou dawn on my ſoul? With thee comes liberty, and peace, and love, and endleſs felicity; but pain, and ſorrow, and tumult, and death, and darkneſs vaniſh before thee for ever. I am juſt upon the ſhores of thoſe happy realms where uninterrupted day and eternal ſpring reſide: yonder are the delectable hills and harmonious vales which continually

continually echo to the ſongs of angels. There the bliſsful fields extend their verdure, and there the immortal groves aſcend; but how dazzling is thy proſpect, O city of God, of whom ſuch glorious things are ſpoke? In thee *there ſhall be no more night, nor need of the ſun or moon;* for the throne of God, and of the Lamb is in the midſt of thee, *and the nations that are ſaved ſhall walk in thy light, and the kings of the earth ſhall bring their glory and honour into thee; and there the glorious Lord ſhall be to us a place of defence, a place of ſtreams and broad rivers*; and the voice of joy, and ſhout of triumph ſhall be heard in thee for ever.

There holy ſouls perpetual ſabbaths keep,
And never are concern'd for food and ſleep:
There new-come ſaints with wreaths of light are crown'd,
While iv'ry harps and ſacred trumpets ſound:
There flaming ſeraphs ſacred hymns begin,
And raptur'd cherubs loud reſponſes ſing.

My eyes ſhall there behold the King in his beauty, and oh! how raviſhing will the aſpects of his love be? What unutterable exſtaſies ſhall I feel, when I meet thoſe ſmiles which enlighten hea-

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ven, and exhilarate all the celeſtial regions? When ſhall I view the beatific glory without one interpoſing cloud to eternity? When ſhall I drink my fill at the fountains of joy, and in thoſe rivers of pleaſure that flow from his right-hand for ever?

XXII. *A devout reſignation of ſelf to the divine power and goodneſs.*

MY all-ſufficient friend, *my ſhield, and my exceeding great reward!* I have enough: unbounded avarice can covet nothing beyond thee; the ſoul whom thou doſt not ſuffice, deſerves to be eternally poor. Thou art my ſupreme happineſs, my voluntary choice; I took thy love for my treaſure in that bleſt day when I enter'd into covenant with thee, and became thine: I made no articles with thee for the friendſhips, the honours, and pleaſures of the world; but ſolemnly renounced them all, and choſe thy favour for my ſingle inheritance, leaving the conduct of my life entirely to thee.

Theſe were my vows, and theſe I have often renewed; and ſhall I now retract

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ſuch ſacred obligations, and alter a choice ſo juſt and reaſonable? Forbid it, gracious God! let me never be guilty of ſuch madneſs: the world has often diſappointed my moſt confident expectations, but thou haſt never deceived me. In all my diſtreſs I have found thee a certain refuge, *my ſhield, my fortreſs, my high tower, my deliverer, my rock, and he in whom I truſt.* When there was none to ſave me, thy powerful hand has ſet me free; thou haſt redreſs'd my grievances, and diſſipated my fears; thou haſt brought me light out of obſcurity, and turn'd my darkneſs into day.

WHEN the world could afford me nothing but tempeſt and diſorder, with thee I have found repoſe and undiſturb'd tranquillity. Thou haſt been my long experienc'd refuge, my unfailing confidence, and I ſtedfaſtly depend on thee, for my future conduct. I cannot err when guided by infinite wiſdom; I muſt be ſafe in the arms of eternal love, to which I humbly reſign myſelf. Let me have riches or poverty, honour or contempt; whatever comes from thy hands ſhall be thankfully received. I would

hear no voice but thine, nor make a ſtep but where I am following thee.

If thou wouldſt leave me to chuſe for myſelf, I would reſign the choice again to thee. I dread nothing more than the guidance of my own blind deſires; I tremble at the thoughts of ſuch a fatal liberty: avert, gracious God, that miſerable freedom. Thou foreſeeſt all events, and at one ſingle view doſt look through eternal conſequences; therefore do thou determine my circumſtances, not to gratify my own wild deſires, but to advance thy glory.

Thou haſt an unqueſtion'd right to diſpoſe of me. I am thine by neceſſary ties and voluntary engagements, which I thankfully acknowledge and ſolemnly renew: deliberately and entirely I put myſelf into thy hands. Whatever intereſt I have in this world I ſacrifice to thee, and leave my deareſt enjoyments to thy diſpoſal, acknowledging it my greateſt happineſs to be guided by thee.

Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? that thou who art ſupremely bleſs'd, and independently happy, ſhouldſt concern thyſelf with human affairs, and condeſcend to make our wants

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as much thy care as if mortal miſeries could reach thee, and interrupt immortal bleſſedneſs. Thou wouldſt make us ſenſible of thine indulgence by the moſt tender ſimilitudes: a father's gentle care but faintly ſhadows thine, and all we can conceive of human pity falls ſhort of thy compaſſion. Thou doſt ſeem to ſhare in our calamities, and ſympathize in all our grief. No friend flies to our aſſiſtance with all the ſpeed that love brings thee, nor canſt thou ever want methods to relieve thoſe that confide in thee.

Thy providence finds or makes its way through all oppoſitions: the ſtreams ſhall roll back to their fountains, the ſun ſhall ſtand ſtill, and the courſe of nature be revers'd, rather than thou want means to bring thy purpoſes to paſs. No obſtacle puts a ſtand to thy deſigns, nor obſtructs thy methods: 'tis thy will that makes nature and neceſſity: Who can ſtay thy hand, or ſay unto thee, *What doſt thou?* Thy counſel ſhall ſtand, and thou wilt do all thy pleaſuee. Nothing is impoſſible for thee to accompliſh: wherever I caſt my eyes, I ſee inſtances of thy power: the extended firmament, the ſun

and ſtars, tell me what thou art able to perform; they atteſt thy omnipotence, and rebuke my unbelief. The whole creation pleads for thee, and condemns my infidelity.

Almighty God, forgive my diffidence, while I confeſs it is moſt inexcuſable. Thy hand is not ſhorten'd, nor are the ſprings of thy bounty ſeal'd; thy antient miracles have not exhauſted thy ſtrength, nor hath perpetual beneficence impoveriſh'd thee; thy power remains undiminiſh'd, and thy mercy endureth for ever. That dazzling attribute ſurrounds me with tranſporting glories: which way ſoever I turn, I meet the bright conviction: I cannot recall a day of my paſt life on which ſome ſignature of thy goodneſs is not ſtamp'd.

Oh! who hath taſted of thy clemency
In greater meaſure or more oft than I?
Which way ſoe'er I turn my face or feet,
I ſee thy mercy and thy glory meet.

In whatever thou haſt granted, or whatever thou haſt deny'd me, thy beneficence has been mingled with every diſpenſation; thou haſt not taken the advantage of my follies, nor been ſevere

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to my ſins; but haſt remember'd my frame, and treated me with the utmoſt indulgence. Glory be to thy name for ever.

XXIII. *Redeeming love.*

ALmighty love, the theme of every heavenly ſong! infinite grace, the wonder of angels! forgive a mortal tongue that attempts thy praiſe; and yet ſhould man be ſilent, the mute creation would find a voice to upbraid him.

But oh! in what language ſhall I ſpeak? with what circumſtance ſhall I begin? Shall I roll back the volumes of eternity, and begin with the glorious deſign that determin'd man's redemption, before the birth of time, before the confines of creation were fix'd?

Infinite years before the day,
Or heavens began to roll.

Shall I ſpeak in general of all the nations of the redeem'd? or, to excite my own gratitude, ſhall I conſider myſelf, my worthleſs ſelf, included by an eternal decree among the number of thoſe who ſhould hear of a Redeemer's name,

and be mark'd out a partaker of that immenſe privilege? Before the foundation of the hills were laid, the gracious deſign was form'd, and the bleſſed plan of it ſchemed out before the curtains of the ſky were ſpread.

Lord! what is man? what am I? what is all the human race, to be thus regarded? O narrow thoughts, and narrower words! here confeſs your defects: Theſe are heights not to be reach'd by you. Adorable meaſures of infinite clemency! unſearchable riches of grace! with what aſtoniſhment do I ſurvey you! I am ſwallowed and loſt in the glorious immenſity. All hail, ye divine myſteries, ye glorious paths of the unſearchable Deity! let me adore, tho' I can never expreſs you.

Yet ſhould I be ſilent, heaven and earth, nay, hell itſelf would reproach me: the damn'd themſelves would call me ungrateful, ſhould I fail to celebrate that grace whoſe loſs they are for ever lamenting: a loſs that leaves them for ever deſperate and undone. 'Tis this grace which tunes the harps of heaven, and yields them an immortal ſubject of harmony and praiſe. The ſpirits of juſt

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men made perfect fix their contemplations here; they adore the glorious myſtery, and while they ſing the wonders of redeeming love, they aſcribe ſublime and living honours to him that ſits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. And infinitely worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive the grateful homage. Who ſhall not praiſe and magnify thy name? Who ſhall deny the tribute of thy glory?

But, alas! what can mortal man add to thee? What can nothingneſs and vanity give? We murmur from the duſt, and attempt thy praiſe from the depths of miſery; yet thou doſt condeſcend to hear and liſten to our broken accents; amidſt the *hallelujahs* of angels, our groans aſcend to thee, our complaints reach thee: from the height of thy happineſs, and from the exaltations of eternal glory, thou haſt a regard to man, poor wretched man! thou receiveſt his homage with delight; his praiſes mingle with the harmony of angels, nor interrupt the ſacred concord. Thoſe natives of heaven, thoſe morning-ſtars, ſing together in their heavenly beatitudes, nor diſdain to let the ſons of earth and mortality

tality join with them in celebrating the honours of Jeſus, their Lord and ours: To him be every tongue devoted, and let every creature for ever praiſe him. *Amen.*

XXIV. *Pleading for pardon and holineſs.*

IMmortal ſpring of life, the fountain of all exiſtence, the firſt and laſt, *without beginning of days, or end of years;* before the heavens were created thou waſt, and ſhalt remain unchang'd while they wax old and decay. Thou art infinitely bleſs'd in thyſelf; thy glory admits of no addition; the praiſes of angels cannot heighten thy happineſs, nor the blaſphemies of hell diminiſh it. Thou canſt do every thing, and thy power finds no obſtacle. *Thou madeſt heaven and earth, the ſea and the fountains of water; thou doſt according to thy will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; thou holdeſt the waters in the hollow of thy hand, and meaſureſt out the heavens with a ſpan: thou comprehendeſt the duſt of the earth in a meaſure, and weigheſt the*

mountains

mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance: thou covereſt thyſelf with light, as with a garment, and art ſurrounded with inacceſſible ſplendour: *thou art glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes; the heavens are not clean in thy ſight, but thou chargeſt thine angels with folly: what then is man, that drinks in iniquity like water? What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the ſon of man, that thou doſt thus viſit him?* 'Tis becauſe thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever; mercy is thy prevailing attribute. Thou art compaſſionate, and infinitely gracious, and haſt fully manifeſted thy love and beneficence to the race of man, in the glorious methods of our redemption from everlaſting bondage and death by thy Son Jeſus.

Therefore, with the loweſt reverence, and moſt humble gratitude, I deſire to proſtrate myſelf before thee, acknowledging it my greateſt honour, and undeſerved privilege, to approach the Lord, and bow myſelf before the high God; I that am unworthy to utter thy tremendous name, or once to lift up my eyes to heaven. To my own confuſion, I here confeſs I have abuſed the mercy which

I now

I now implore, and injured that goodneſs and forbearance by my ſins which I am now addreſſing myſelf to. I have forfeited the very benefits I aſk, and deſpiſe thoſe ſacred privileges which I am forc'd to plead: I can uſe ſcarce any motive, but what would carry in it my own condemnation. Shall I implore thy mercy by the gracious terms of the new covenant, ſeal'd by the blood of thy eternal Son? Alas! that gracious covenant I have violated, and profaned its ſacred ſeals: I have ſinn'd againſt the cleareſt light, and the tendereſt inſtances of love: I have not only broken my obligations to thee as my Creator; but the ſtronger engagements of thy adoption, even the glorious privilege of being admitted into thy family, and numbered among the children of God.

But ſtill thoſe very circumſtances that aggravate my guilt, exalt thy mercy: Here the freeneſs and magnificence of thy grace will diſplay itſelf; here thou wilt anſwer the indulgent title of a father in its tendereſt extent; I have no ſins too great for infinite clemency to pardon. Thou art God, and not man; and as the heavens are high above the

earth,

earth, ſo high are thy ways of compaſſion above all human methods.

I dare not ſet bounds to thy goodneſs, nor affirm that *thus far, and no farther*, divine patience extends. Thou haſt pardoned and reſtored me to thy favour too often for me now to deſpair: my penitent ſighs were never rejected, nor my humble requeſt unanſwered: I have always found the heavens open, and the throne of God acceſſible, through the blood of a Redeemer. By his agony and bloody ſweat, by his croſs and paſſion, by his painful death and glorious reſurrection, I implore thy pardon: he has made a full atonement, and divine juſtice will demand no farther ſatisfaction. *To him give all the prophets witneſs, that thro' his name, whoſoever believes in his name ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.*

O bleſſed *Jeſus!* the hope of the *Gentiles*, the ſalvation of the ends of the earth; the great *Meſſiah*, the promiſed Saviour, who doſt anſwer thoſe glorious titles in their utmoſt ſignification; to thee, my certain, my experienc'd refuge, I fly: O Son of God, hear me; O Lamb of God, who takeſt away the ſins of the world, have mercy upon me.

O eternal Spirit, the promiſed Comforter, come with all thy ſacred conſolations: come, and be as dew to the drooping flowers, as rain to the parched ground: Oh! come with thy reviving light, and diſpel the darkneſs that beclouds my ſoul: break in like the ſun after a melancholy night; one beam of thine would melt this frozen, this obdurate heart, and kindle in my ſoul the ſpark of holy love; breathe upon my cold affections, and raiſe them to a ſacred flame.

Searcher of hearts, from whom nothing is conceal'd, whoſe penetrating eyes find out hypocriſy in its darkeſt diſguiſe; thou knoweſt the deſires of my ſoul, and art my impartial witneſs, that I kneel not here for the riches and honours of the world; that I am not proſtrate before thee for length of days or pleaſure; but that 'tis the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, that I ſeek. Give me not my portion with the rich and great, but let me have my humble lot with thy children; let me bear contempt and deriſion, and ſuffer reproach with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon.

Thy favour is the end of all my wiſhes, the conſtant ſubject of my prayer. Oh! thou whoſe ears are open to the wants of all thy creatures, who heareſt the young ravens when they cry from their neſts to thee, who giveſt the men of the world the tranſitory things they chuſe, wilt thou deny the deſires which thou thyſelf doſt inſpire and approve? O let me be fill'd with that righteouſneſs which I hunger and thirſt after, and be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs. Thou can'ſt not be diminiſh'd, whatever perfection thou doſt communicate to the creature; endleſs liberality could not make thee poor.

I aſk not privileges above the capacity of my nature, nor aſpire to the perfections of angels; I only beg that I may reach thoſe heights of holineſs and divine love, which ſouls inveſted with a mortal body like mine, and incumber'd with the ſame human paſſions, have attained. But in vain I ſtrive to imitate thoſe bright examples thou haſt ſet before me; without thy aſſiſtance, all my endeavours will prove ſucceſsleſs. Thou knoweſt the frailty of my nature, and the mighty difficulties I have to encoun-

ter: I have not only the allurements of the world, but all the ſtratagems of hell to engage with, and a treacherous heart within, ready, on all occaſions, to betray me into ſin and endleſs perdition: O let my impotence and danger awaken thy compaſſion.

Remember thy former benignity, O Lord, and let that engage thee to grant me new ſupplies of that grace, by which alone I ſhall prove victorious. Thy bounty to any of the works of thy hands muſt always flow from the goodneſs of thy own nature; for what creature can pretend to merit any thing from thee? I would urge nothing but thy own infinite mercy, when I intreat thee not to let me periſh after the wonderful things thou haſt done for my ſoul: After all the pledges thou haſt given me of thy love, let not my follies provoke thee to forſake me; but remember thy covenant, and its gracious articles, and act according to thy own ineffable benignity, which has been the glorious motive of every favour I have received from thee.

XXV. *A tranſport of gratitude for ſaving mercy.*

I Bleſs a thouſand times the happy day when firſt a beam of heavenly light broke in on my ſoul; when the day-ſtar from on high viſited me, and the celeſtial light began to dawn. I welcom'd its chearful luſtre, and felt the ſacred influence; the flames of holy love awoke, and holy joys were kindled.

The earth and all its pageantry diſappeared like clouds before the morning-ſun: the ſcenes of paradiſe were open'd, ---ſeraphic pleaſures and unutterable delights: all hail, I cry'd, you unknown joys, you unxperienc'd pleaſures! compared to you what's all I have reliſh'd till now? what's earthly beauty and harmony? what's all that mortals call charming and attractive? I never lived till now: I knew no more than the name of happineſs till now: I have been in a dream during all the days of my folly and vanity, but now I awake to the life of heaven-born ſpirits, and taſte the joys of angels.

XXVI. *Importunate requeſts for the return of* GOD *to the ſoul.*

THOU great and glorious, thou inviſible and univerſal Being, art thou no nearer to be approach'd? or do I ſearch thee amiſs? Is there a corner of the creation unviſited by thee, or any place exempt from thy preſence? I trace thy footſteps through heaven and earth; but I cannot overtake thee.

Why do I ſeek thee, if thou art not here?
Or find thee not, if thou art every where?

Tell me, O my God, and my all, tell me where thou art to be found; for there is the place of my reſt. What imaginable good can ſupply thy abſence? Deprived of thee, all that the world could offer would be like a jeſt to a dying man, and provoke my averſion and diſdain. 'Tis a God that I ſeek:

My wiſhes ſtoop not to a lower aim;
Thou, thou haſt kindled this immortal flame,
Which nothing can allay.

Adieu, adieu to all human things! Let me find my God, the end of all my wiſhes:

wiſhes: Why doſt thou keep back the face of thy throne? Why does the cloud and ſacred darkneſs conceal thee?

Thy voice produc'd the ſeas and ſpheres,
Bid the waves roll, and planets ſhine;
But nothing like thyſelf appears,
Thro' all theſe various works of thine.

O thou fairer than all the works of thy hands, wilt thou ever hide thyſelf from a creature that loves and ſeeks thee with ſo intenſe deſire? I appeal to thee, O Lord, are not my breathings after thee moſt hearty and unfeigned? Does not my ſoul pant after thee with a fervour which cannot be extinguiſhed, and a ſincerity which cannot be diſguiſed?

For thee I pine, and am for thee undone;
As drooping flowers that want their parent ſun.

How do my ſpirits languiſh for thee! No ſimilitudes can expreſs the vehemence of my deſires: wealth and glory, friends and pleaſure, loſe their names compared to thee. To follow thee I would leave them all behind; I would leave the whole creation, and bid the fields and ſparkling ſkies adieu. Let the heavens and earth be no more; while thou endureſt for ever, I can want

no ſupport. My being itſelf, with all its bleſſedneſs, depends entirely on thee.

Place me far from the bounds of all creation, remote from all exiſtence but thy own; in that ineffable ſolitude, let me be loſt; let me expatiate there for ever; let me run the endleſs rounds of bliſs;---but, alas! I flatter myſelf in vain, with ſcenes of unattainable happineſs. I will ſearch thee then, where I hope thou mayeſt be found. I caſt my eyes to the bright regions above, and almoſt envy the happy beings that ſee thy face unveil'd: I ſearch thee in the flow'ry meadows, and liſten for thee among the murmuring ſprings: then, ſilent and abſtracted from human things, I ſearch thee in holy contemplation. 'Tis all in vain: nor fields, nor floods, nor clouds, nor ſtars reveal thee.

Ye happy ſpirits, that meet his ſmiles, and hear his voice, direct a mournful wanderer while I ſeek him whom my ſoul loves, while I ſigh and complain, and caſt my languiſhing eyes to yonder happy manſions; fain would I penetrate the ſtarry pavilions, and look thro' the ſeparating firmament: Oh! that thou wouldſt divide the clouds, that

thou

thou wouldſt rend the heavens, and give me one glimpſe of thy glory! that thou wouldſt diſplay thy beauty, and in the midſt of theſe earthly ſcenes of amuſing vanity, give me one moment's interval of celeſtial bleſſedneſs.

One look of mercy from thy eye,
One whiſper of thy voice,
Exceed a whole eternity
Employ'd in carnal joys

Could I the ſpacious earth command,
Or the more boundleſs ſea,
For one dear hour at thy right-hand,
I'd give them both away.

If things were put into juſt balances, and computed aright, for the firſt moment of this ſatisfaction, I am ready to ſay, the whole creation would be cheaply loſt: how gladly would I reſign all for ſuch a bliſs! Adieu to human things; let me find my God, the end of all my wiſhes: 'tis he whom I ſeek, 'tis he alone can ſatisfy my infinite deſires. Oh! why doſt thou withdraw? why thus long conceal thyſelf? Where doſt thou retire? nor earth, nor heaven reply to my repeated calls.

For

Let me invoke thee by every gracious title, my God, and the God of my fathers: from one generation to another thou haſt been our dwelling-place; the claim has deſcended from age to age; thy covenant has been eſtabliſhed with us, and thy faithfulneſs remains unblemiſh'd. Oh! forget not thy covenant, forget not the bleſſings entail'd on me; forget not the prayers and tears by which my pious anceſtors have engaged thy mercy for me; forget not their vows and ſolemn dedication of me to thee: Oh! recal thy ancient favours, and renew thy former mercy to a family, which has been thine in a ſucceſſion of ages.

Let me invoke thee now by a nearer propriety: my covenant God, my father, and my friend! if by all thoſe tender names I have ever known thee, forget me not. By thoſe ſacred engagements, O Lord, I intreat thy return. If all thy paſt favours were real, if all was waking bliſs, and not a gay deluſion, O reſtore my heaven again. Life of my ſoul, light of my eyes, return: come, and bring all thy ſacred conſolations; once again let me experience thoſe holy joys that thy preſence imparts; once again

let

let me hear thy voice, and once again be bleſt with thy ſmiles.

Oh! hear, and to my longing eyes
Reſtore thy wonted light;
And ſuddenly, or I ſhall ſleep
In everlaſting night.

Bleſſed Saviour, in thee we behold the face of God as a reconciled Father; and doſt thou withdraw thyſelf? O how welcome will thy returns be? how like the breakings of immortal day will thy preſence cheer me? how dearly ſhall I prize my happineſs? how fearful ſhall I be of every thing that would offend thee? how joyful in the bleſſed diſcovery and poſſeſſion of thy love? I'd whiſper my bliſs to the liſt'ning ſtreams and groves:

I'd carve thy paſſion on the bark,
And every wounded tree
Shall droop, and bear ſome myſtic mark
That JESUS dy'd for me.

The ſwains ſhall wonder when they read,
Inſcrib'd on all the grove,
That heaven itſelf came down and bled
To win a mortal's love.

But why do I flatter myſelf with theſe delightful ſcenes? I find thee abſent ſtill:

I mourn

I mourn and complain as one unpitied: what is life while thou art abſent? Oh! return and bleſs me with thy preſence, thou who knoweſt my diſtreſs, and art acquainted with my ſecret cares. Thou who art the witneſs of my midnight ſighs, and doſt hear when at the dawning day I call thee; but ſtill thou anſwereſt not, and ſeemeſt deaf to my prayers. I am, 'tis true, a worthleſs wretch; but vile as I am, thou haſt, in thy immenſe compaſſion, brought me into covenant with thee: *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

He is my ſun, tho' he refuſe to ſhine;
Tho' for a moment he depart,
I dwell for ever on his heart,
For ever he on mine.

Nothing can break the ſacred union; but for this confidence I were undone; but for this beam of hope I were loſt in eternal darkneſs. *Why art thou diſquieted, O my ſoul, and why art thou caſt down within me? Hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the light of his countenance.* I ſhall yet welcome his return, I ſhall yet hear his charming voice, and meet his favourable ſmiles.

But

But why, O my God, this long ſuſpence? Why do theſe intervals of night and darkneſs abide upon me, and torment my heart ſo long? Wilt thou deny a bliſs ſo eaſily granted? I aſk no more than is lawful for mortality to wiſh: I aſk not the viſions of angels here below, nor the beatitudes of perfected ſpirits; I aſk but what thou haſt bid me ſeek, and given me hopes to obtain: I aſk that ſacred fellowſhip, that ineffable communion with which thou favoureſt thy ſaints.

Oh! let me hear thoſe heavenly whiſpers that give them the foretaſtes of immortal pleaſures: Let me be ſenſible of thoſe divine approaches that kindle celeſtial ardour in their ſouls: Let me meet thoſe beams that darken all mortal beauty: Let me enjoy, at this earthly diſtance, thoſe ſmiles that are the bliſs of angels in heaven. Tho' 'tis but darkly, and afar off, yet let me feel their influence; 'twill brighten the paſſage of life, it will direct me thro' its mazes, and gild its rough and gloomy paths: 'twill raiſe the flames of ſacred love, it will waken the divine principle within me, and ſet it a glowing thro' all my powers. I

ſhall

ſhall abandon, I ſhall forget the vanities below, and the glories of the world will be no more. But while thou, O my God, hideſt thy face, I loſe my ſun, I languiſh and die: Yet to thee I will lift up my eyes, to thee I lift up my ſoul.

Come, Lord, and never from me go,
This world's a darkſome place:
I find no pleaſure here below,
When thou doſt veil thy face.

XXVII. *Breathing after* GOD, *and weary of the world.*

'TIS no mean beauty of the ground
That has allur'd my eyes:
I faint beneath a nobler wound,
Nor love below the ſkies.

If words can reach the heights of love and gratitude, let me pour out the ſecret ardour of my ſoul; O let it not offend thy greatneſs, that duſt and vanity adores and loves thee. If thou hadſt given me other capacities, and form'd any thing more ſuitable to my wiſhes, I might have found a lower happineſs, and been content with ſomething below the infinite Deity; but the ſcanty creation

tion affords nothing to ſatisfy me, and I follow thee by a divine inſtinct and mere neceſſity of nature.

My life is uſeleſs, and my being inſignificant without thee: my reaſon has no proper employment; love the nobleſt paſſion of my ſoul, has no object to anſwer its dignity. I am reduced to abſolute poverty; my nature is entirely ruined; I am loſt, eternally loſt, undone, and abandoned to deſpair, if I am deprived of thee. There can be no reparation made for an infinite loſs; nothing can be inſtead of God to my ſoul.

I have willingly renounced all things elſe for thy ſake: all the ſentiments of tenderneſs and delight that my ſoul ever feels for any earthly object, is mere indifference, compared to my love for thee; and it grows into hatred when that object ſtands as thy rival or competitor. This is the conquering, the ſuperior flame that draws in and ſwallows up all the other ardours of my nature. My engagements with all terreſtial things, are broken; the names of father, of brother, or of friend, are no more: abſtracted from thee, theſe tender titles give me neither confidence nor joy, and are mere

inſignificant names, but as thou doſt give them an emphaſis; they are nothing at all without thee; and with thee, what infinite good can be an addition?

The ſoul can hold no more, for God is all,
He only equals its capacious graſp,
He only overfills to ſpaces infinite.

Thou art my God, and I have enough; my ſoul is ſatisfied. I am entirely at reſt. Divide the vain, the periſhing creation to the miſerable wretches that aſk no other portion; let them unenvied poſſeſs the honours, and riches, and pleaſures of the world, with a laviſh hand divide them away: theſe things are but as the duſt of the balance to the happy ſoul that knows what the light of thy countenance imports. After that there can be no reliſh left for the low delights of mortality,

Loſt in the high enjoyments of thy love,
What glorious mortal could my envy move?

You ineffable delectations of divine love, let me have no ſentiment of pleaſure left but for you. My God revealing his glories and his graces in *Jeſus Chriſt*

Chriſt his Son, is ſufficient for my eternal entertainment.

What if all former ideas of viſible things were wiped from my ſoul? what if I had no imagination, no memory, no traces left of any thing but the joys I have found in thy preſence, and the aſſurances of thy everlaſting favour? Thoſe are the only paſt moments I recal with pleaſure, and oh! let all the vaſt eternity before me be ſpent in theſe ſatisfactions.

Vaniſh, ye terreſtrial ſcenes! fly away, ye vain objects of ſenſe! I reſign all thoſe poor and limited faculties by which you are enjoy'd; let me be inſenſible to all your impreſſions, if they do not lead me to my God. Let *chaos* come again, and the fair face of nature become an univerſal blank: let her glowing beauties all fade away, and thoſe divine characters ſhe wears be effaced, I ſhall yet be happy; the God of nature, and the original of all beauty is my God.

What if the ſun were extinguiſhed in the ſkies, and all the etherial lamps had burnt out their golden flames, I ſhall dwell in light and immortal day, for my God will be ever with me. When the

groves ſhall no more renew their verdure, nor the fields and vallies boaſt any longer their flow'ry pride; when all theſe lower heavens, and this earth, are mingled in univerſal ruin, and theſe material images of things are more; I ſhall ſee new regions of beauty and pleaſure for ever opening themſelves in the divine eſſence, with all their original glories.

But oh! how various, how boundleſs, how tranſporting will the proſpect be? Oh! when ſhall I bid adieu to phantoms and deluſions, and converſe with eternal realities? when ſhall I drink at the fountain-head of eſſential life and bleſſedneſs?

——————————————And then
" O what?—But aſk not of the tongues of men,
" For angels cannot tell.—Let it ſuffice.
" Thyſelf, my ſoul, ſhall feel thy own full joys,
" And hold them faſt for ever."

Oh! break my fetters, for I muſt be gone. Bring my ſoul out of priſon; I am ſtraitn'd; the whole creation is too narrow for me; I ſicken at this confinement, and groan and pant for liberty. How ſweet are the thoughts of enlargement? My ſoul is already on the wing, and practiſes imaginary flights: I ſeem to reach the heaven

heaven of heavens, where God himſelf reſides. It is good for me to be here.——

But ah! how ſoon the clouds of mortal ſenſe
Ariſe, and veil the charming viſion?

Alas! what do I here in this waſte and dreadful wilderneſs, this diſmal region, where our delights are vaniſhing, and the very glimpſes of future felicity we enjoy are ſo ſoon overſhaded and ſurrounded with real horrors? Alas! what do I here, waſting that breath in ſighs and endleſs complaints, that was given me to bleſs and praiſe the infinite Creator? Alas! what do I here, among ſtrangers and enemies, in this wild unhoſpitable place, far from my home, and all the objects of my ſolid delight.

My wiſhes, hopes, my pleaſures, and my love,
My thoughts, and nobleſt paſſions are above.

What do I here in the dominions of death and ſin, in the precincts and range of the powers of darkneſs? Here they lay their toils, and ſet their fatal ſnares; but, Lord, what part have they in me? I have bid defiance to the powers of darkneſs in thy ſtrength, and renounced my ſhare in the vanities of the world. I

am a ſubject of another kingdom, and dare not enter into any terms of peace and amity with the irreconcileable adverſaries of God and my ſoul, which inhabit theſe treacherous and ſinful regions. *The friendſhip of this world is enmity with God.* Death and deſtruction are in its ſmiles; I ſtand on my guard, and am every moment in danger of ſurpriſe: oh! when will my deliverance come from on high?

——When, my ſoul,
O when ſhall thy releaſe from cumb'rous fleſh
Paſs the great ſeal of heaven? What happy hour
Shall give thy thoughts a looſe to ſoar and trace
The intellectual world?

What glorious ſcenes ſhall open when once this mortal partition falls, when theſe walls of clay ſhall totter and ſink down into duſt? Ye waters of life, ye torrents of immortal pleaſure, how impetuouſly will ye then roll in upon me, and ſwell and fill up all the capacities of joy in my nature? Every faculty ſhall then be fill'd, and every wiſh ſhall end in unutterable fruition. *When I awake into immortal light, I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs.* Theſe expreſsleſs deſires will die into everlaſting raptures: hope

hope and languiſhing expectation will be no more; but preſent, complete, and unbounded ſatisfactions will ſurround me. My God, my God himſelf ſhall be my infinite, my unutterable joy: all the avenues of pleaſure ſhall be open before me, the ſcenes of beauty and proſpects of delight. *Everlaſting joy ſhall be upon my head, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall fly away for ever.*

There will be no more intervals of grief and ſin; ſin, that inſupportable evil, that worſt, that heavieſt burden: here the painful and deadly preſſure lies: it is this that hangs as a weight on all my joys: But, thanks be to my God, I can ſay, I ſincerely deteſt and hate this vileſt of ſlaveries, this curſed bondage of corruption; I long for the glorious liberty of the ſons of God; I groan under this load of fleſh, this burden of mortality, this body of death.

But grant, O Lord, I may with patience continue in well-doing, and at laſt obtain glory and immortality through my Redeemer's righteouſneſs. *Sanctify me through thy word of truth*, remember this requeſt of my glorious Advocate.

XXVIII. *A prayer for ſpeedy ſanctification.*

O Lord God, great and holy, all-ſufficient, and full of grace, if thou ſhouldſt bid me form a wiſh, and take whatſoever in heaven or earth I had to aſk, it ſhould not be the kingdoms of this world, nor the crowns of princes; no, nor ſhould it be the wreaths of martyrs, nor the thrones of archangels: My firſt requeſt is to be made holy; this is my higheſt concern. Rectify the diſorders ſin has made in my ſoul, and renew thy image there; let me be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs. Thou has compaſs'd my paths with mercy in all other reſpects, and I am diſcontented with nothing but my own heart; becauſe it is ſo unlike the image of thy holineſs, and ſo unfit for thy immediate preſence.

Permit me to be importunate here, O bleſſed God, and grant the importunity of my wiſhes; let me be favour'd with a gracious and ſpeedy anſwer, for I am dying while I am ſpeaking: the very breath with which I am calling upon thee, is carrying away a part of my life: this tongue that is now invoking thee, muſt ſhortly be ſilent in the grave: theſe

knees

knees that are bent to pay thee homage, and theſe hands that are now lifted to the moſt high God for mercy, muſt ſhortly be mouldering to their original duſt: theſe eyes will ſoon be clos'd in death, which are now looking up to thy throne for a bleſſing. Oh! prevent the flying hours with thy mercy, and let thy favour outſtrip the haſty moments.

Thou art unchang'd, while rolling ages paſs along; but I am decaying with every breath I draw: my whole allotted time to prepare for heaven is but a point, compar'd with thy infinite duration. The ſhortneſs and vanity of my preſent being, and the importance of my eternal concerns, join together to demand my utmoſt ſolicitude, and give wings to my warmeſt wiſhes. Before I can utter all my preſent deſires, the haſty opportunity perhaps is gone, the golden minute vaniſh'd, and the ſeaſon of mercy has taken its everlaſting flight.

Oh! God of ages, hear me ſpeedily, and grant my requeſt while I am yet ſpeaking; my frail exiſtence will admit of no delay; anſwer me according to the ſhortneſs of my duration, and the exigence of my circumſtances. My buſineſs,

ſineſs, of high importance as it is, yet is limited to the preſent NOW, the paſſing moment; for all the powers on earth cannot promiſe me the next.

Let not my preſſing importunity therefore offend thee; my happineſs, my everlaſting happineſs, my whole being is concerned in my ſucceſs: as much as the enjoyment of God himſelf is worth, is at ſtake.

Thou knoweſt, O Lord, what qualifications will fit me to behold thee; thou knoweſt in what I am defective; thou canſt prepare my ſoul in an inſtant, to enter into thy holy habitation: I breathe now, but the next moment may be death; let not that fatal moment come before I am prepared. The ſame creating voice that ſaid, *Let there be light*, and there was light, can, in the ſame manner, purify and adorn my ſoul, and make me fit for thy own preſence; and my ſoul longs to be thus purified and adorned. O Lord, delay not, for every moment's interval is a loſs to me, and may be a loſs unſpeakable and unrepairable. Thy delay cannot be the leaſt advantage to thee; thy power and thy clemency are as full this preſent inſtant

as

as they will be the next, and my time as fleeting, and my wants as preſſing.

Remember, O eternal God, my loſt time is forever loſt, and my waſted hours will never return, my neglected opportunities can never be recall'd; to me they are gone for ever, and cannot be improved; but thou canſt change my ſinful ſoul into holineſs, by a word, and ſet me now in the way to everlaſting improvement.

O let not the Spirit of God reſtrain itſelf, but bleſs me according to the fulneſs of thy own being, according to the riches of thy grace in *Chriſt Jeſus*, according to thy infinite unconceivable love manifeſted in that glorious gift of thy beloved Son, wherein the fulneſs of the Godhead was contained: it is through his merit and mediation I humbly wait for all the unbounded bleſſings I want or aſk for.

XXIX. *Gratitude for early and peculiar favours.*

LET me trace back thy mercy, O my God, from the firſt early dawn of life, and bleſs thee for the privileges of my

my birth, that it was not in the lands of darkneſs, where no ray of the goſpel had ever darted its light; where the name of a Saviour never had reach'd my ears, nor the tranſporting tidings of redemption from eternal miſery had never bleſs'd my ſoul.

But how ſhall I expreſs my gratitude for that grace which ordain'd my lot in this happy land, one of the iſlands of which it was long ſince propheſied, *they ſhould ſee thy glory, and truſt in thy name? God has enlarged* Japhet, even the iſlands of the ſea, *and made him to dwell in the tents of* Shem, in the inheritance of *Abraham.* I have my deſcent from the *Gentiles*, who were once *ſtrangers to the covenant of grace, aliens from the commonwealth of* Iſrael; but are now brought nigh by the blood of ſprinkling. *Jeſus*, the great Peace-maker, hath brought both near to God, and to each other.

I bleſs thee with all my powers, for the privilege of my deſcent from pious anceſtors; that thou haſt been their dwelling-place from generation to generation, and haſt not *taken thy loving-kindneſs from their ſeed, nor ſuffered thy faithfulneſs to fail.*

Thou

Thou haſt extended thy mercy to me, the laſt and leaſt of all my father's houſe, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meaneſt of the ſervants of my Lord; and yet by an abſolute act of goodneſs, I am brought into thy family, and number'd with the children of God. Even ſo it has ſeemed good in thy ſight, who *art gracious to whom thou wilt be gracious.*

I might have been a veſſel of wrath, a trophy to thy juſtice, inſtead of a monument of thy mercy; how unſearchable thy ways! how uncontroul'd and free! thou didſt regard me in my low eſtate, in more than my original guilt and miſery; for I had improv'd the wretched ſtock, and been a voluntary, as well as a natural ſlave to ſin and death.

From this ignominious ſlavery, thou, my great Redeemer, haſt ranſomed me, and brought me into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God: I was a ſtranger, and thou didſt take me in; naked, and thou haſt cloathed me with the ſpotleſs robes of thy own righteouſneſs: I was hungry, and thou didſt feed me; thirſty, and thou didſt give me to drink of the fountain of life.

What am I, O Lord, and what is my father's houſe, that thou haſt dealt thus graciouſly with me, in entering into an everlaſting covenant, ſign'd and ſeal'd, even ſenſibly ſeal'd to my ſoul by the witneſs of thy Spirit? Lord, why me rather than many that were companions of my early vanities and folly? whence were the motives drawn, but from thy ſovereign pleaſure? how many are paſt by, that could have done thee more ſervice, and returned a warmer acknowledgment to thy diſtinguiſhing bounty?

Ye ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, ye ranſom'd nations, triumphant above, inſtruct me in the art of celeſtial eloquence; tell me in what ſtrains of ſacred harmony you expreſs your gratitude for this glorious redemption, while, in exalted raptures, you ſing *to him that lov'd and waſh'd you in his own blood, and made you kings and prieſts to God.*

XXX. *Aſpiring after the viſion of* GOD *in heaven.*

I *Beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory:* it was a mortal in a ſtate of frailty and imperfection that made this bold, but pi-

ous

ous requeſt; which I repeat on different terms: ſince none can ſee thy face and live, let me die to behold it. This is the only requeſt I have to make, and this will I ſeek after, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord, not as I have ſeen it in thy ſanctuary below, but in full perfection and ſplendour, as thou art ſeen by ſeraphs and cherubs, by angels and archangels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.

O my God, forgive my importunity: thou haſt commanded me to love thee with all my heart, my ſoul, my ſtrength, and haſt, by thy Spirit, kindled the ſacred flame in my breaſt: from this riſes my preſent impatience; from hence the ardour of my deſires ſpring. Can I love thee, and be ſatisfied at this diſtance from thee? Can I love thee, and not long to behold thee in perfect excellence and beauty? Is it a crime to preſs forward to the end for which I was created? All my wiſhes and my hopes of happineſs terminate in thee.

Does not the thirſty traveller pine for ſome refreſhing ſtream? would not the weary be at reſt, or the wretched captive be free? and ſhall not my thirſty

weary, captive ſoul long for refreſhment, liberty, and reſt? I am but a ſtranger, a pilgrim here, and have no abiding place; this is not my reſt, my home; and yet if thou haſt any employment for me, though the meaneſt office in thy family, I will not repine at my ſtay.

But, O Lord, thou haſt no need of ſuch worthleſs ſervice as I can pay thee; thy angels are ſpirits, thy miniſters flames of fire; thouſands of thouſands ſtand before thee, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand miniſter unto thee; they attend thy orders, and fly at thy command. O deliver me from this burden of mortality, and I will ſerve thee with a zeal as pure and active as theirs.

I can ſpeak of thy loving-kindneſs to the children of men in a very imperfect manner; but then I will join with the celeſtial quire in praiſing thee, and rehearſe to liſtening angels what thou haſt done for my ſoul. Here I have a thouſand interruptions from the delightful work, a thouſand cold and darkſome intervals, when my heart and tongue are both untun'd, a thouſand neceſſary diſtractions that riſe from the miſeries of mortality; but when theſe intervals of grief

and

and ſin ſhall ceaſe, my ſoul ſhall dwell at eaſe, and be for ever glad, and rejoice in thy ſalvation.

XXXI. *A ſurrender of the ſoul to* GOD.

COmmand me what thou wilt, O Lord, give me but ſtrength to obey thee; be thy terms never ſo ſevere, O let us never part. I reſign my will, my liberty, my choice to thee; I ſtand diveſted of the world, and aſk only thy love as my inheritance. Give, or deny me what thou wilt, I leave all the circumſtances of my future time in thy hands: let the Lord guide me continually; here I am, do with me what ſeemeth good in thy ſight, only do not ſay, *Thou haſt no pleaſure in me.*

Let me not live to diſhonour thee, to bring a reproach on thy name, to profane the blood of the Son of God, and grieve the Spirit of grace. O take not thy loving-kindneſs from me, nor ſuffer thy faithfulneſs to fail. Thou haſt ſworn by thy holineſs, and thou wilt not lie to the ſeed of thy ſervants; thou haſt ſworn that the generation of the righteous ſhall *be bleſſed: veſt me with* this

character, O my God, and fulfil this promiſe to a worthleſs creature.

XXXII. *Truſt and reliance on the divine promiſes.*

O Let not my importunity offend thee, for 'tis the importunity of faith: 'tis my ſtedfaſt belief in thy word that makes me perſiſt: thy word and thy oath, *the two immutable things in which it is impoſſible for God to lie*, give me *ſtrong conſolation.*

'Tis this that makes me preſs forward to thy throne, and with confidence lay hold on thy ſtrength, thy wiſdom, and thy faithfulneſs, on thy goodneſs and tender compaſſion; thoſe glorious attributes for which *the children of men put their truſt under the ſhadow of thy wings.* 'Tis thy glory to be the confidence of the ends of the earth, and it was long ſince predicted, *That in thy name the* Gentiles *ſhould truſt.*

Kind Guardian of the world, our heavenly aid,
To whom the vows of all mankind are paid——

we pay the higheſt homage, and exalt thy

thy infinite attributes by faith and confidence in thee.

I know that *thou art*, and believe thee *a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek thee.* I will never quit my hold of thy promiſes, there I fix my hopes: I will not let a title go, nor part with a mite of the glorious treaſure. I humbly hope I have a rightful claim; thou art my God, and the God of my religious anceſtors, the God of my mother, the God of my pious father; dying and breathing out his ſoul, he gave me to thy care, he put me into thy gracious arms, and delivered me up to thy protection. He told me, thou wouldſt never leave nor forſake me; he triumph'd in thy long-experienc'd faithfulneſs and truth, and gave his teſtimony for thee with his lateſt breath.

And now, O Lord God of my fathers, whoſe mercy has deſcended from age to age, whoſe truth has remain'd unblemiſh'd and inviolable, and whoſe love remains without decay, O Lord, the faithful God and the true, keeping covenant and mercy to a thouſand generations, let me find that protection and bleſſing that the prayers of my dying father

father engag'd for me: now in the time of my diſtreſs, be a preſent help; and if thou wilt this once deliver me, thou alone ſhall be my future truſt, my counſellor, and hope; to thee I will immediately apply myſelf, and look on the whole force of created nature as inſignificant. To thee I will devote all the bleſſings thou ſhalt give me, my time, my life, my whole of this world's goods; whatever ſhare thou ſhalt graciouſly allot me, ſhall ſurely be the Lord's.

Oh! hearken to the vows of my diſtreſs, and for thy own honour deliver me from this perplexity, which thou knoweſt, and reveal to me the abundance of mercy and truth.

'Twas my dependence on thy promiſe, and fidelity that brought me into this exigence: I ſtagger'd not at thy promiſes thro' unbelief, but boldly ventur'd on the credit of thy word: I took it for my ſecurity, and can the ſtrength of *Iſrael* repent? Canſt thou break thy covenant, and alter the thing that is gone out of thy mouth?

O God of Abraham, *God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, *this is thy name for ever, and this thy memorial to all generations;*

tions; the God before whom my fathers walked, the God that fed me all my life long till now, and the angel that redeemed me from all evil, bleſs me. Let the God of *Jacob* be my help; let the Almighty bleſs me; let the bleſſings of my father *prevail above the bleſſing of his progenitors, to the utmoſt bounds of the everlaſting hills.*

Bleſs me, according to thy own greatneſs, according to the unſearchable riches of thy grace in *Chriſt Jeſus*; he is the ſpring of all my hope, in whom all the promiſes of God are Yea, and Amen; he is the true and faithful witneſs, and has, by his death, ſeal'd the divine veracity, and is become ſurety for the honour and faithfulneſs of the moſt high God. To this alſo the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit of truth, bears witneſs.

Oh! great *Jehovah*, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, the Lord God omnipotent, hear and grant my requeſt, for the glory of thy mighty name, that name which ſaints and angels bleſs and love: let thy perfections be manifeſt to the children of men; let them ſay, there is a God that judgeth in the earth: let them confeſs thou doſt keep thy covenant

nant with the ſeed of thy ſervants, that thy righteouſneſs is from age to age, and thy ſalvation ſhall never be aboliſh'd; let them ſee and acknowledge, that in the fear of the Lord is ſtrong confidence, and his children have a place of refuge.

Unſhaken as the ſacred hill,
And firm as mountains be;
Firm as a rock the ſoul ſhall reſt
That leans, O Lord, on thee.

Memorandum.

This act of faith in God was fully anſwer'd, and I leave my teſtimony, that *the name of the Lord is a ſtrong tower, and he knoweth them that put their truſt in him.*

XXXIII. *Application to the divine truth.*

HOwever intricate and hopeleſs my preſent diſtreſs may be to human views, why ſhould I limit the Almighty? or why ſhould the Holy One of *Iſrael* limit himſelf? Nature and neceſſity are thine; thou ſpeakeſt the word, and it comes to paſs; no obſtacle can oppoſe

the

the omnipotence of thy will, nor make thy deſigns ineffectual.

Is thy hand at all ſhorten'd ſince the glorious period, when thy mighty power, and thy ſtreched arm form'd the heavens and earth; when theſe ſpacious ſkies were ſpread at thy command, and this heavy globe fix'd on its airy pillars?

The ſtrong foundations of the earth
Of old by thee were laid;
Thy hands the beauteous arch of heaven
With wond'rous ſkill have made.

And *theſe ſhall wax old as a garment, as a veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be chang'd*; but ſhouldſt thou, like theſe, decay, where were the hopes of them that confide in thee? If in all generations thy perfections were not the ſame, what conſolation could the race of men draw from the ancient records of thy wonderful works? Why are we told, *thou didſt divide the ſea, to make a path for thy people through the mighty waters*; that thou didſt *rain bread from heaven*, and diſſolve the flinty rock in cryſtal rills to give thy choſen nation drink?

Thou art he that diſtinguiſhed *Noah* in the univerſal deluge, and preſerv'd the

the floating ark amidſt winds, and rains, and tumultuous billows.

'Twas thy protecting care that led *Abraham* from his kindred and his native country, and brought him ſafely to the promis'd land.

Thou didſt accompany *Jacob* in his journey to *Padan-aram*, and gave him bread to eat, and raiment to put on, till greatly increas'd in ſubſtance: he return'd to his father's houſe, he wreſtled for a bleſſing, he wreſtled with the Almighty, and prevail'd.

With *Joſeph* thou wenteſt down into *Egypt*, and didſt deliver him out of all his adverſities, till he forgot his ſorrows, and all the toil of his father's houſe.

Thou didſt remember thy people in the *Egyptian* bondage, and look with pitying eyes on their affliction; and, after four hundred and thirty years, on the very day thou hadſt promis'd, didſt releaſe and bring them out with triumph and miracles. Thy preſence went with them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and a protecting fire by night: thy conquering hand drove out great and potent nations, and gave them an entire poſſeſſion of the land promis'd to their fathers:

thers: nor didſt thou fail in the leaſt circumſtance of all the good things thou hadſt promiſed.

What a cloud of witneſſes ſtand on record! *Joſhua* and *Gideon*, *Jephtha* and *Sampſon*, who, through faith, obtained promiſes.

Thou didſt command the ravens to feed thy holy prophet; and, at the word of a prophet, didſt ſuſtain the widow's family with a handful of meal.

Thou didſt walk with the three *Hebrews* in the fiery furnace: thou waſt preſent with *Daniel* in the lions den to deliver him, becauſe he truſted in thee.

In what inſtance has the prayer of faith been rejected? Where were the righteous forſaken? Who can charge God, without charging him fooliſhly? What injuſtice has been found in the Judge of all the earth? His glorious titles have ſtood unblemiſh'd from generation to generation; nor can any of his perfections decay, or rolling years make a change on the *Antient of days*.

Are not his words clear and diſtinct, without a double meaning, or the leaſt deceit? Are they not ſuch as may juſtly ſecure my confidence? ſuch at would ſa-

tisfy me from the mouth of man, inconſtant man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, and his foundation in the duſt, unſtable as water, and fleeting as a ſhadow? And can I ſo ſlowly aſſent to the words of the Moſt High? Shall I truſt impotent man, that has neither wiſdom nor might to accompliſh his deſigns, that cannot call the next breath or motion his own, nor promiſe himſelf a moment in all futurity? Can I reſt on theſe feeble props, and yet tremble and deſpond when I have the veracity of the eternal God to ſecure and ſupport me?

I know he will not break his covenant, nor ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail: I dare atteſt it in the face of earth and hell, I dare ſtake my all for time and eternity on this glorious truth, a truth which hell cannot blemiſh, nor all its malice contradict.

Exert yourſelves, ye powers of darkneſs, bring in your evidence, collect your inſtances, begin from the firſt generations ſince the world was peopled, and men began to call on the name of the Lord. When did they call in vain? When did the Holy One of *Iſrael* fail the expectation of the humble and contrite

trite ſpirit! Point out, in your blackeſt characters, the diſmal period, when the name of the Lord was no more a refuge to them that truſted in him? Let the annals of hell be produc'd, let them mark the dreadful day, and diſtinguiſh it with eternal triumphs.

In vain you ſearch; for neither heaven, nor earth, nor hell, have ever been witneſs to the leaſt deviation from truth or juſtice: The Almighty ſhines with unblemiſh'd glory, to the confuſion of hell, and the conſolation of thoſe that put their truſt in him.

On thy eternal truth and honour I entirely caſt myſelf. If I am deceiv'd, I am deceiv'd: Angels and archangels are deluded too; they, like me, have no dependence beyond the divine veracity for their bleſſedneſs and immortality; they hang all their hopes on his goodneſs and immutability; if that fails, the celeſtial paradiſe vaniſhes, and all its glories are extinct; the golden palaces ſink, and the ſeraphic thrones muſt totter and fall. Where are your crowns, ye ſpirits elect? Where are your ſongs and your triumphs, if the truth of God can fail? A mere poſſibility of that would darken

the fields of light, and turn the voice of melody into grief and lamentation.

What pangs would riſe, even through all the regions of bleſſedneſs, what diffidence and fear would ſhake the heart of every inhabitant, what agonies ſurprize them all, could the word of the moſt high God be cancell'd? The pillars of heaven might then tremble, and the everlaſting mountains bow, the celeſtial foundations might be mov'd from their place, and that nobleſt ſtructure of the hands of God be *chaos*, and eternal emptineſs.

But for ever *juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints; bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in thee;* for thou art a certain refuge in the day of diſtreſs, and under the ſhadow of thy wings I will rejoice. *My ſoul ſhall make her boaſt in the Lord, and triumph in his ſalvation: I call'd on him in my diſtreſs, and he has deliver'd me from all my fears.*——Hallelujah.

Here I diſmiſs my carnal hope,
My fond deſires recal;
I give my mortal intereſt up,
And make my God my all.

XXXIV. *Glory*

XXXIV. *Glory to* GOD *for ſalvation by* JESUS, *and his blood.*

LET me give glory to God before I die, and take ſhame and confuſion to myſelf. I aſcribe my ſalvation to the free and abſolute goodneſs of God; not by the ſtrength of reaſon, or any natural inclination to virtue, but by *the grace of God I am what I am.* O my Redeemer, be the victory, be the glory thine. I expect eternal life and happineſs from thee, not as a debt, but a free gift, a promiſed act of bounty. How poor would my expectations be, if I only look to be rewarded according to thoſe works which my own vanity, or the partiality of others, have called *good*, and which, if examin'd by the divine purity, would prove but ſpecious ſins? As ſuch I renounce them: pardon them, gracious Lord, and I aſk no more; nor can hope for that, but thro' the ſatisfaction which hath been made to divine juſtice for the ſins of the world.

O JESUS, my Saviour, what harmony dwells in thy name! celeſtial joy, immortal life is in the ſound.

Sweet name! in thy each ſyllable
A thouſand bleſs'd Arabias dwell;
Mountains of myrrh, and beds of ſpices,
And ten thouſand paradiſes.

Let angels ſet this name to their golden harps; let the redeemed of the Lord for ever magnify it.

O my propitious Saviour, where were my hopes but for thee? How deſperate, how undone were my circumſtances? I look on myſelf, in every view I can take, with horror and contempt. I was born in a ſtate of miſery and ſin, and in my beſt eſtate am altogether vanity. With the utmoſt advantages I can boaſt, I ſhrink back, I tremble to appear before unblemiſh'd Majeſty. O thou in whoſe name the *Gentiles* truſt, be my refuge in that awful hour. To thee I come, my only confidence and hope. Let the blood of ſprinkling, let the ſeal of the covenant be on me. Cleanſe me from my original ſtain, and my contracted impurity, and adorn me with the robes of thy righteouſneſs, by which alone I expect to ſtand juſtified before infinite juſtice and purity.

O enter

O enter not into judgment with me; for the beſt actions of my life cannot bear thy ſcrutiny; ſome ſecret blemiſh has ſtain'd all my glory. My devotion to God has been mingled with levity and irreverence; my charity to man with pride and oſtentation. Some latent defect has attended my beſt actions, and thoſe very things which, perhaps, have been highly eſteem'd by men, have deſerv'd contempt in the ſight of God.

"When I ſurvey the wond'rous croſs
"On which the Prince of glory dy'd;
"My richeſt gain I count my loſs,
"And pour contempt on all my pride.

"Forbid it, Lord, that I ſhould boaſt,
"Save in the croſs of Chriſt, my God;
"All the vain things that charm me moſt,
"I ſacrifice them to thy blood."

April 30. 1735.

XXXV. *A review of divine mercy and faithfulneſs.*

I Am now ſetting to my ſeal that God is true, and leaving this as my laſt teſtimony to the divine veracity. I can, from

from numerous experiences, aſſert his faithfulneſs, and witneſs to the certainty of his promiſes. *The word of the Lord is try'd, and he is a buckler to all thoſe that put their truſt in him.*

O come, all you that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done for my ſoul; I will aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker, and leave my record for a people yet unborn, that the generation to come may riſe up and praiſe him.

Into whatever diſtreſs his wiſe providence has brought me, I have called on the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears; I truſted in God, and he ſaved me. Oh! let my experience ſtand a witneſs to them that hope in his mercy; let it be to the Lord for a praiſe and a glory.

I know not where to begin the recital of thy numerous favours. Thou haſt hid me in the ſecret of thy pavilion, from the pride of man, and from the ſtrife of tongues, when, by a thouſand follies, I have merited reproach: thou haſt graciouſly protected me, when the vanity of my friends, or the malice of my enemies might have ſtained my reputation: thou haſt covered me with thy

thy feathers, and under thy wings have I truſted; thy truth has been my ſhield and my buckler; to thee I owe the bleſſing of a clear and unblemiſhed name, and not to my own conduct, nor the partiality of my friends.—Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Thou haſt led me through a thouſand labyrinths, and enlight'ned my darkneſs. When ſhades and perplexity ſurrounded me, my light has broke forth out of obſcurity, and my darkneſs been turned into noon-day. Thou haſt been a guide and a father to me. When I knew not where to aſk advice, thou haſt given me unerring counſel: *The ſecret of the Lord has been with* me, and he *has ſhewn me his covenant.*

In how many ſeen and unſeen dangers haſt thou delivered me? how narrow my gratitude? how wide thy mercy? how innumerable are thy thoughts of love? how infinite the inſtances of thy goodneſs? how high above the ways and thoughts of man?

How often haſt thou ſupply'd my wants, and by thy bounty confounded my unbelief? Thy benefits have ſurpris'd and juſtly reproach'd my diffidence;

dence; my faith has often fail'd, but thy goodneſs has never fail'd. The world and all its flatteries have fail'd, my own heart and hopes have fail'd, but thy mercy endures for ever, thy faithfulneſs has never fail'd.

The Strength of *Iſrael* has never deceiv'd me, nor made me aſham'd of my confidence. Thou haſt never been as a deceitful brook, or as waters that fail to my ſoul.

In loving-kindneſs, in truth, and in very faithfulneſs, thou haſt afflicted me: Oh! how unwillingly haſt thou ſeem'd to grieve me? with how much indulgence has the puniſhment been mix'd? Love has appear'd through the diſguiſe of every frown; its beams have glimmer'd through the darkeſt night; by every affliction thou haſt been ſtill drawing me nearer to thyſelf, and removing my carnal props, that I may lean with more aſſurance on the Eternal Rock.

Thy love has been my leading glory from the firſt intricate ſteps of life: the firſt undeſigning paths I trod were marked and guarded by the vigilance of thy love; oh! whither elſe had my ſin and folly led me?

How

How often have I try'd and experienced thy clemency, and found an immediate anſwer to my prayers? Thou haſt often literally fulfilled thy word: I have a freſh inſtance of thy faithfulneſs again: thou haſt made me triumph in thy goodneſs, and given a new teſtimony to the veracity of thy promiſes.

And, after all, what ingratitude, what inſenſibility reigns in my heart? Oh! cancel it by the blood of the covenant: root out this monſtrous infidelity that ſtill returns after the fulleſt evidence of thy truth. Thou haſt graciouſly condeſcended to anſwer me in my own time and way, and yet I am again doubting thy faithfulneſs and care. *Lord*, pity me, *I believe, O help my unbelief.* Go on to ſuccour, go on to pardon, and at laſt conquer my diffidence. Let me hope againſt hope, and in the greateſt perplexity give glory to God, by believing what my own experience has ſo often found, —*That the Strength of* Iſrael *will not lie, nor is he as man, that he ſhould repent.*

While I have memory and thought, let his goodneſs dwell on my ſoul. Let me not forget the depth of my diſtreſs, the anguiſh and importunity of my

vows:

vows: when every human help fail'd, and all was darkneſs and perplexity, then God was all my ſtay. Then I knew no name but his, and he alone knew my ſoul in adverſity. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.

" Long as I live, I'll bleſs thy name,
" My King, and God of love;
" My work and joy ſhall be the ſame
" In the bright worlds above."

I have yet a thouſand, and ten thouſand deliverances to recount, ten thouſand unaſk'd for mercies to recal: no moment of my life has been deſtitute of thy care; no accident has found me unguarded by thy watchful eye, or neglected by thy providence. Thou haſt been often found, unſought by my ungrateful heart, and thy favours have ſurpriſed me with great and unexpected advantages: thou haſt compell'd me to receive the bleſſings my fooliſh humour deſpiſed, and my corrupt will would fain have rejected. Thou haſt ſtopp'd thy ears to the deſires which would have ruined and undone me, when I might juſtly have been left to my own choice, for the puniſhment of my many ſins and follies.

follies. How great my guilt! how infinite thy mercy!

Hitherto God has help'd, and here I ſet up a memorial to that goodneſs, which has never abandon'd me to the malice and ſtratagems of my infernal foes, nor left me a prey to human craft or violence. The glory of his providence has often ſurpris'd me, when groping in thick darkneſs. With a potent voice he has ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light.* He has made his goodneſs paſs before me, and loudly proclaimed his name, *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious.* To him be glory for ever. *Amen.*

XXXVI. *Some daily experiences of the gracious methods of divine providence, to me the leaſt and moſt unworthy of all the ſervants of my Lord.*

FIRST WEEK. *

I.

EVERY day's experience reproaches my unbelief, and brings me ſome new evidence of thy faithfulneſs. Thou haſt diſpell'd my fears, and to the confuſion of my ſpiritual foes, thou haſt heard the voice of my diſtreſs. But a few hours ago, I was trembling and doubting, if thou waſt indeed a God hearing prayer; and now I have a freſh inſtance of thy goodneſs, which, with a grateful heart, I here record. May the ſenſe of thy benefits dwell for ever on my ſoul.

II.

Thy mercies are new every morning; again thou haſt given me an inſtance of thy truth: *I truſted in God, and he has delivered*

* *Note*, The diviſion of theſe meditations into ſevens by the pious writer, ſeems to tell us, that theſe were the devout thoughts of ſix weeks of her life.

delivered me; I will love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my ſupplication; therefore will I call on him as long as I live.

III.

As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all that put their truſt in him. He has punctually fulfilled the word on which I relied: bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul.

IV.

Thy bounty follows me with an unwearied courſe: language is too faint to expreſs thy praiſe: no eloquence can reach the ſubject. My heart is warm with the pious reflection; I look upward, and ſilently breathe out the unutterable gratitude that melts and rejoices my ſoul. I ſtagger'd at thy promiſe through unbelief, and yet thou haſt graciouſly performed thy words. If we ſometimes doubt or faulter in our faith, yet he abideth faithful who has promiſed.

V.

With the morning-light my health and peace are renew'd: the cheering in-

fluence of the ſun, and the ſweeter beams of the divine favour ſhine on my tabernacle.—Lord, Why me? Why am I a ranſom'd pardon'd ſinner?—Why am I rejoicing among the inſtances of ſovereign grace, and unlimited clemency?

VI.

I boaſted in thy truth, and thou haſt not made me aſham'd: my infernal foes are confounded, while my faith is crown'd with ſucceſs.

Oh! who hath taſted of thy clemency,
In greater meaſure, and more oft than I!

VII.

As the week begun, ſo it ends with a ſeries of mercy: language and numbers fail to reckon thy favours, but this ſhall be my eternal employment.

When nature fails, and day and night
Divide thy works no more,
My ever thankful ſoul, O Lord,
Thy goodneſs ſhall adore.

SECOND

SECOND WEEK.

I.

I *Have ſeen the goings of God my King in the ſanctuary:* but O, how tranſient the view! my ſins turned back thy clemency, and yet I can celebrate the wonders of forgiving grace.

II.

What do I owe thee, O thou great Preſerver of men, for eaſy and peaceful ſleep, for nights unmoleſted with pain and anxiety.

Thou round my bed a guard doſt keep:
Thine eyes are open while I ſleep.

Not a moment ſlides in which I am unguarded by thy gracious protection.

III.

Thanks be to God, who has given me the victory through the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. Thou haſt delivered me from the ſnare of the fowler, the craft and malice of hell, and kept me back from ſinning againſt thee: be thine the victory and praiſe. *Hallelujah.*

IV.

O Lord God of *Iſrael*, *happy is the man that putteth his truſt in thee.* I left my burden at thy feet, and thou haſt ſuſtain'd me; my cares are diſſipated, my deſires anſwer'd. *O who is a God like unto thee, near unto all that call on thee?*

V.

Thy ſtrength is manifeſt in weakneſs: *Not unto me, O Lord, but to thee be all the glory.*

For ever thy dear charming name,
Shall dwell upon my tongue,
And JESUS and ſalvation be
The theme of every ſong.

This ſhall be my employment thro' an eternal duration: 'tis that alone can meaſure my gratitude. The Lord *Jehovah* is my ſtrength and ſalvation, he alſo ſhall be my ſong.

VI.

Every day's experience confirms my faith, and brings a freſh evidence of thy goodneſs. Thou haſt diſpell'd my fears, and, to the confuſion of my ſpiritual

ritual foes, hearken'd to the voice of my diſtreſs.

VII.

I will love the Lord, who has heard my ſupplications. I made my boaſt in his faithfulneſs, and he has anſwer'd all my expectation.

THIRD WEEK.

I.

MY laſt exigence will be the cloſing part of life. Oh! remember me then, my God. Thou who haſt led me hitherto, forſake me not at laſt. Be my ſtrength when nature fails, and the flame of life is juſt expiring; let thy ſmiles cheer that gloomy hour: oh! then let thy gentle voice whiſper peace and ineffable conſolation to my ſoul.

II.

In ſix and in ſeven troubles thou haſt deliver'd me, and *been a cover from the tempeſt, a hiding-place from the wind*: hitherto God has helped, and I have dwelt ſecure; and here I leave a memorial to thy praiſe, a witneſs againſt all my

my future diſtruſt of thy faithfulneſs and truth.

III.

Every day of my life increaſes the ſum of thy mercies: the riſing and the ſetting ſun, in its conſtant revolution, can witneſs the renewal of thy favours: thou waſt graciouſly preſent in an imminent danger; by thee my bones have been kept entire, and thou haſt not ſuffered me to daſh my foot againſt a ſtone.

IV.

Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his beneſits; who heals thy diſeaſes, and pardons all thy ſins. O thou, the great phyſician of my body, as well as of my diſtemper'd ſoul, thou haſt reſtor'd and ſaved me from death and hell. Bleſſed *Jeſus*, thou haſt *taken my infirmities, and born my ſickneſs: the chaſtiſement of my peace was on thee, and by thy ſtripes I am healed.*

V.

I ſubſcribe to thy truth, O Lord; I atteſt it in contradiction to infernal malice,

lice, to all the helliſh ſuggeſtions that would tempt my heart to diffidence and unbelief, even againſt repeated experience, againſt the fulleſt evidence of the divine veracity.

VI.

Oh! thou, who never ſlumbereſt nor ſleepeſt, this night thy watchful care has kept me from a threatening danger; thy eyes were open, while I was ſleeping, ſecure beneath the covert of thy wings.

VII.

Another, and a greater deliverance has crown'd the day: I have found thy grace ſufficient in an hour of temptation, thy ſtrength has been manifeſt in my weakneſs. Thine was the conqueſt; be the crown and the glory thine for ever. By thee I have triumphed over the ſtratagems of hell; *not unto me, but to thy name be the praiſe, O Lord.*

FOURTH WEEK.

I.

'TIS not one of a thouſand of thy favours I can record; but eternity is before me, and that unlimited duration

tion ſhall be employed to rehearſe the wonders of thy grace. Then in the great aſſembly I will praiſe thee, I will declare thy faithfulneſs, and tell to liſt'ning angels what thou haſt done for my ſoul, even for me, the leaſt in thy family, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meaneſt of the ſervants of my Lord.

II.

How numberleſs are thy thoughts of love to my ſoul! If I ſhould count them, they are more than the ſand on the ſhore: thou haſt again reprov'd my unbelief, and given me a new conviction that my whole dependence is on thee; that ſecond cauſes are nothing, but as thou doſt give them efficacy: all nature obeys thee, and is govern'd at thy command.

III.

O my God, I am again ready to diſtruſt thee, and call in queſtion thy faithfulneſs: oh! how deep has this curſed weed of infidelity rooted itſelf in my nature, but thou can'ſt root it out.

IV.

Again, I muſt begin the rehearſal of thy

thy mercies, which will never have an end; for thou doſt renew the inſtances of thy goodneſs to a poor ungrateful ſinner. Thou haſt punctually fulfill'd the promiſe on which I depended: thou haſt granted the requeſt of my lips, and led me in a plain way that I have not ſtumbled.

V.

This day I have received an unexpected favour: I doubted the ſucceſs indeed, but thou haſt gently rebuked my unbelief, and convinc'd me that all things are poſſible with thee, and that the hearts of the children of men are in thy hands.

VI.

Whether thou doſt favour or afflict me, I rejoice in the glory of thy attributes, in whatever inſtance they are diſplay'd. Be thy honour advanced, whether in mercy or juſtice, I muſt ſtill aſſert the equity of thy ways, and aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker. Yet let me plead with thee, O my God, ſince mercy is thy darling attribute, oh! let it now be exalted: deal not with me in ſeverity, but indulgence; for if thou ſhouldſt

mark

mark what is amiſs, who can ſtand before thee?

VII.

Thou doſt heal my diſeaſes, and renew my life; thou art the guardian of my ſleeping and my waking hours. Glory to my God, whoſe eyes never ſlumber.

FIFTH WEEK.

I.

THOU knoweſt my ſecret grief, where my pain lies, and what are my doubts and difficulties. In thy wonted clemency, O Lord diſpel my darkneſs; leave me not to any fatal deluſion in an affair of everlaſting moment. This is my hour of information and practice; beyond the grave no miſtake can be rectified; as the tree falls, ſo it muſt for ever lie.

II.

Thy goodneſs ſtill purſues me, O heavenly Father, with an unwearied courſe; new inſtances of thy faithfulneſs reproach my unbelief. I ſent up my petition with a doubting heart, and yet thou

thou haſt graciouſly deign'd to encourage my weak and ſtaggering faith, which has often waver'd and fail'd, even in the view of the brighteſt evidence of thy power and truth.

III.

Thou doſt ſeem reſolv'd to leave my unbelief without excuſe, by renewing the glorious conviction of thy clemency and truth. O let not the unworthineſs of the object turn back thy benignity from its natural courſe.

IV.

How many unrecorded mercies have glided along with my fleeting moments into thoughtleſs ſilence, and long oblivion? How prone is my ungrateful heart to forget thy benefits, or (oh! amazing guilt) to make an ungrateful return?

V.

Oh! never let my falſe heart relapſe into diſtruſt and unbelief again; thou haſt rebuk'd my folly, and put a new ſong of praiſe into my mouth: let thoſe infernal ſuggeſtions vaniſh, that would

once object againſt the oft-experienc'd truth. In this I would ſtill triumph, and inſult all the malice of hell. A time will come when thou ſhalt be glorify'd in thy ſaints, when thy truth and faithfulneſs ſhall appear in full ſplendour, when the beauty of thy attributes ſhall be conſpicuous, and clear from every blemiſh that the impiety of men, or the malice of devils have charg'd on thy moſt righteous providence.

VI.

Let me ſtill aſſert, that the ways of God are perfect juſtice and truth: I have a freſh inſtance of thy goodneſs to boaſt, and yet my ungrateful heart is even now ready to diſtruſt. The Lord increaſe my faith: Let thy renewed favours ſilence my unbelief, *to ſhew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteouſneſs in him.*

VII.

Teach me your language, ye miniſters of light, that I may expreſs my wonder and gratitude. O thou, who canſt explain the ſecret meaning of my ſoul, take

take the praiſe that human words cannot expreſs; accept theſe unutterable attempts to praiſe thee.

SIXTH WEEK.

I.

LET me go on, O Moſt Holy, to record thy faithfulneſs and truth; let it be engraven in the rock for ever; let be impreſs'd on my ſoul, and impoſſible to be effaced.—What artifice of hell is it that ſo often tempts me to diſtruſt thee, and joins with my native depravity to queſtion thy truth?

II.

Oh! may I never forget this remarkable preſervation: thy gentle hand ſupported me, and underneath were the everlaſting arms. *Thou haſt kept all my bones, not one of them is broken:* thy mercy upheld me, even when it foreſaw my inſenſibility and ingratitude. How does my guilt heighten thy clemency? How wondrous is thy patience, O Lord, and thy rich grace, that only gently rebuked me

when thou mighteſt have taken ſevere vengeance of my ſins?

III.

I muſt again begin the rehearſal of thy love. Thou haſt eas'd my pain, ſcatter'd my fears, and lengthen'd out my days. Oh! may my being be devoted to thee: let it be for ſome remarkable ſervice that I am reſtor'd to health again.

IV.

I find thy mercies renewed with my fleeting days, and to rehearſe them ſhall be my glad employment; I truſted thee with my little affairs, and thou haſt condeſcended to give me ſucceſs. Lord what is man, that thou doſt thus graciouſly regard him? Even my ſins, my hourly provocations, cannot put a check to the courſe of thy beneficence; it keeps on its conquering way againſt all the oppoſition of my ingratitude and unbelief: and haſt thou not promis'd, O Lord, it ſhall run parallel with my life, and meaſure out my days?

Jeſus,

V.

Jeſus, my never-failing truſt, I call'd on thy name, and thou haſt fully anſwered my hopes: let thy praiſes dwell on my tongue, let me breathe thy name to the laſt ſpark of life. Thou haſt ſcatter'd my fears, and been gracious beyond all my hopes! my faint and doubting prayers have not been rejected; but oh! how ſlow are my returns of praiſe, how backward my acknowledgments?

VI.

Never have I truſted thee in vain; Lord, increaſe my faith; confirm it by a continued ſeries of thy bounty: add this favour to the reſt, for faith is the gift of God, an attainment above reaſon or nature. I am now waiting for the accompliſhment of a promiſe; O! ſhew me thy mercy and truth, add this one inſtance to the reſt, and for ever ſilence the ſuggeſtions of hell, and my own infidelity.

How

VII.

How rooted is this curſed principle of unbelief, that can yet diſtruſt thee after ſo many recorded inſtances of thy love? How long will it be ere my wavering ſoul ſhall entirely confide in thy ſalvation? Oh! my God, pity my weakneſs, give new vigour to my faith, and let me take up my reſt in thee for ever.

The END.